AMERICAN WORKERS AND TEMPERANCE REFORM, 1866-1933

A Dissertation

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by

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PREFACE

This study is an exploration of the interest of American workers and their organizations in the ideal of temperance and the temperance movement. It is not a general history of the anti-drink movement or the Prohibition crusade, but an investigation of what one segment of American society thought about the temperance drive and its culmination in the Eighteenth Amendment.

As Joseph Gusfield, Alan Grimes, and other recent historians of nineteenth-century reform movements have suggested, the champions of the temperance cause also demanded the recognition of related values generally described as the "Puritan Ethic"--perseverence, diligence, and thrift. If these values were ever restricted to Calvinistic Protestantism, they had become the values of the new industrial society by the middle of the nineteenth century. Working men and labor reformers who supported the virtue of sobriety also found themselves espousing the virtues of hard work, frugality, and diligence as the important values in the quest for material success.

The designation "working men" is an abstract category and, for the purpose of this study, the term was carefully limited to those organizations of workers and labor reformers whose views clearly reflected the social and economic interests of the wage-earning classes. While the concern for the well-being of the industrial worker and his family crossed social and economic lines in American society, the arguments of middle-class spokesmen on behalf of temperance and sobriety have been explored by other historians.

There is always a structural abyss between the formal and states principles of an organization and the personal attitudes of members as individuals. Because the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers excluded saloon-keepers, it would be foolish to assume that every engineer shared that animus towards the man behind the brass-rail and the mahogany bar. Many certainly did not. However, the drafting and approval of constitutional provisions and by-laws did represent a consensual agreement indicative of popular feelings on the temperance question.

One approach to the analysis of individual attitudes on the drink questions was to devote particular attention to the letters written to labor newspapers and journals as well as the general labor press. This was not difficult to do, for labor periodicals in the ninettenth century freely solicited the opinions of their readers on all the major issues of the moment. Many of these journals and newspapers served as open forums where diverse and conflicting points of view were discussed with spirit.

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The temperance movement and the Prohibition experiment have often been interpreted as manifestations of evangelical Protestantism, or rural animosity towards urban America. There was, on the other hand, always a strong economic motivation running through the temperance enterprise. Countless writers of anti-drink letters to the labor journals were quick to point to the secular appeal of sobriety. While many temperance advocates thought that liquor was soul-corrupting, others emphasized that insobriety was purse-depleting. At a time when working men believed they were being submerged by rapid ecnomic changes and were afraid of losing what little status they possessed, the temperance ideal promised social and economic upward mobility. The sober worker, it was said, was the first to be hired and the last to be fired. Temperance reform did draw the warm endorsement of Protestant Fundamentalists and rural bluenoses, but it also held the steadfast support of those who were devoted to what they called the deserving poor. The temperance advocate was, as often as not, a model social reformer.

In the pursuit of this study of working men and the temperance ideal, I relied heavily on the following labor newspapers and journals: the *Workingman's Advocate*, the *Journal of United Labor*, *John Swinton's Paper*, the *Monthly Journal of the Brotherhood of Locomotive*

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Engineers, the *Railway Trainman's Journal*, *The American Federationist*, and *Industrial Solidarity*, the major newspaper of the Industrial Workers of the World in the West. I have drawn material from the proceedings of the annual meetings of the Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor, and various individual trade unions. As with most students of American labor history, I relied on Professor John R. Commons's *Documentary History of American Industrial Society* for information not easily found elsewhere. *The Union Signal*, the leading publication of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, and the *Minutes* of the national conventions of the WCTU contained extensive information on organized appeals to working men for their support in the temperance movement. For labor's attitude and response to the Eighteenth Amendment I have consulted a number of trade union publications in an attempt to measure the reaction of separate unions to the Prohibition experiment.

I wish to thank the librarians of the University of Notre Dame, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the Francis E. Willard Memorial Library of the WCTU, the Department of Labor, Franklin and Marshall College, and Millersville State College for their help in finding and securing the material and sources for this study.

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I acknowledge with deep appreciation the criticisms and encouragement of Dr. Philip Gleason, the director of this dissertation, and the helpful suggestions of Dr. Vincent P. De Santis, Father Thomas E. Blantz, C.S.C., and Dr. Samuel Shapiro who were the departmental readers.

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CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

Introduction

The rapid expansion of industrialized society in the nineteenth century made intemperance and habitual intoxication problems for public concern. The growth of machine production, larger factories, and increased demand for disciplined labor raised the question of the effect of extensive intoxication on the working classes and provoked the social concern of reformers and labor leaders. Those who worked to mute the savage effects of long hours and exhausting toil on the bodies and personalities of the industrial laborer repeatedly singled out intemperance as the special burden of the artisan classes. Middle-class reformers took the lead in establishing reform movements to protect the rights and dignity of the industrial worker, but many other leaders emerged from the ranks of labor to champion the cause of their own class.

The problems of the early industrial worker were quickly recognised by social critics who gathered statistics on factory and home conditions. Long hours in harsh and unhealthy surroundings taxed the energy and spirit of the worker. Information gathered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that bakers in 1900 worked sixty-eight hours a week in Massachusetts for an average daily wage of $2.15.[1] The typical Pennsylvania coal miner earned only $1.82 per day in 1898, an actual decrease from the $1.91 he received in 1892.[2] Indeed as late as 1896 female cigar workers earned as little as .58¢ a day for a fifty-two hour work week, and even in 1907 the female cigar strippers of Boston received only .15¢ an hour.[3] Exhausted or unemployed workers, both male and female, found a natural release in the conviviality of taverns and saloons, where they socialized with fellow laborers beset with the same frustrations or desires. The old saying that the quickest way out of Manchester was through the doors of a public house invited few contrary arguments.

In an industrialized economy, the worker found himself an urban consumer as well as a producer. He had to pay rent, purchase food and clothing, pay insurance and union dues, and maintain a small surplus for unexpected emergencies. Even before the Civil War the head of the family found that his uncertain income could not support the necessities of his family, and other members of the household were sent out to work. When jobs were not available, women and children were added to the urban poor rolls. The remarkable vertical mobility enjoyed by many artisans and mechanics in the eighteenth century had become exceptional by 1830.[4]

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[1] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *History of Wages in the United States from Colonial Times to 1928, With Supplement, 1929-1933*, Reprint, (Detroit, 1966), p. 148.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 332.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 428.

The budget of the industrial worker by the middle of the century included only a small margin between income and expenditure which could be used to invest in furniture, housing, or savings. Habitual drinking left the worker less to spend for necessary purchases and directly affected the economic well-being of his family. Living on a marginal budget, intemperate habits of the father determined whether his children were sent to school or out into the labor market. Insobriety was an economic as well as a social problem.

As the working classes emerged in the industrial society of England and the United States, middle-class reformers and labor spokesmen saw the problem of intemperance as a major obstacle to be overcome in organizing the workers and making them economically secure. Early in the nineteenth century an alliance developed between temperance advocates and reformers to alleviate public drunkenness within the laboring classes, an alliance which held sobriety to be a fundamental necessity in the movement to free the worker from the oppression of the wage system. The motto of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers summed up the new emphasis on the character reformation of the laboring man: "Sobriety, Truth, Justice and Morality." If a worker invested what he spent for drink in a dime savings bank, friendly society, or cooperative enterprise, he could assure himself and his family a measure of economic stability.

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[4] David Montgomery, "The Working Classes of the Pre-Industrial City, 1780-1830," Labor History, 9(1968), pp. 3-17.

For middle-class reformers the values of thrift, frugality, diligence, and sobriety offered a non-revolutionary alternative to rapid social improvement. By supporting moral sobriety and disavowing barricades and bloodshed, they were able to satisfy their own inner commitment to ease the burdens of the laboring poor. It was also true, however, that many middle-class temperance advocates openly identified with the poor. In England during the nineteenth century the "middle-class leadership so valuable to the temperance movement had always owed much to a positive preference among some manufacturers and tradesmen for the company of the relatively poor."[5] This preference was not difficult to understand, for many of those temperance reformers had experience the ascent from poverty to security within the span of a generation.

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[5] Brian Harrison, "The British Prohibitionists, 1853-1872: A Biographical Analysis," International Review of Social History, XV(1970), p. 389.

As late as 1830 Federal Day parades in the United States included processions of urban artisans and mechanics marching with banners and mottoes depicting the spirit of "moral earnestness" which characterized the former guild system. The old respect for the virtuous workman found a new outlet in the attack on intemperance and the movement to reaffirm the image of the working man as a sober, responsible producer in the new industrial society of mid-century America. Even though the American temperance movement developed early in the nineteenth century and directly influenced the temperance movement in England, it was in England rather than the United States that the alliance between temperance reform and the labor movement first emerged.

The English Experience

An early investigator of the English manufacturing population, Peter Gaskell, wrote in 1833 that drinking ("a pernicious habit!") was "prevailing to a frightful extent in this portion of the population." He estimated that in Manchester itself there were one thousand inns, beer houses, and gin palaces, and almost ninety per-cent of the establishments catered directly to the workers and the poor of the city. Gaskell noted that these public houses opened early and closed late to entice the worker on his way to work and home again.[6] In the pubs of the greatest industrial city in the North, one found mother and child, as well as father, "herding promiscuously with prostitutes, pickpockets, the very scum and refuse of society."[7] "Many a collier," another social critic remarked, "spends in drink what he has shut up a young child the whole week to earn in a dark corner as a trapper."[8]

A parliamentary investigating committee was told in 1834 that Liverpool dockers were often paid in taverns at the week's end. In many cases, the contractors who hired the dockers also owned the pubs in which they received their wages. According to the testimony of one witness, there were only one or two contractors, out of one-hundred-twenty or more, who paid their workers anywhere other than a public house.[9] He continued:

> It was, and still is, the practice to meet the workmen at public houses early on Saturday evening, and to keep out of the way til 10, 11 or 12 o'clock...; then the shops would be closed before they could go to purchase the articles wanted for their families.[10]

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[6] Peter Gaskell, as quoted in E. Royston Pike, "Hard Times": Human Documents of the Industrial Revolution (New York, 1966), pp. 50-51.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., p. 168.

[9] As quoted in C. R. Fay, Life and Labour in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1933), pp. 222-223.

[10] Ibid.

This mode of wage payment, called the truck system, was prevalent in most of the port cities of England. The saloon-keeper was often seen as the dishonest associate of the unscrupulous labor exploiter, but it was not until 1883 that Parliament passed an act which halted the payment of wages in public houses.

Teetotalism, voluntary total abstinence, was first popularized by Joseph Livesey of Preston, Lanchashire, in the 1830s. Livesey, a weaver who turned to cheese selling, published the Preston Temperance Advocate which appealed directly to artisans and poorer members of the working classes.[11] The English historian, Brian Harrison, suggests in his study of the Victorians and the temperance movement that teetotalism and the work of men such as Livesey marked an important phase in the development of working class identity. In his estimation teetotalism "fostered recognition that rapid social change was possible, encouraged the joining of reforming associations, and promoted articulateness among working class leaders."[12]

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[11] Brian Harrison, "Drink and Sobriety in England, 1815-1872: A Critical Bibliography," International Review of Social History, Vol. XII, Pt. 2 (1967), pp. 218-219, 245-47.

[12] Brian Harrison, Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872 (Pittsburgh, 1971), p. 367.

The association of temperance reformers and working class sympathizers at the same time found warm support among English Primitive Methodists, a "sect of trade union cadres," as E. J. Hobsbawm described them in his study of nineteenth-century labor sects.[13] Breaking with the Wesleyans in 1811, the sect spread among the miners in the North, the farm workers in the Midlands, and groups of factory operatives in the Northeast. In these areas Primitive Methodism was "so closely identified with trade unions as to become, practically, a labour religion."[14] It carried the message of temperance, especially teetotalism, to the laborers who made up nearly all its congregations.

The best example of the early interest in temperance reform by English workers was temperance or teetotal Chartism. Harrison, in his reassessment of Victorian temperance reformers, suggests that teetotal Chartism was instrumental in bringing some factions of the Chartist movement into line with the main elements of Victorian liberalism, and if teetotal Chartists were often ignored it was because their demands "linked temperance with particular political views and even with revolution."[15] Francis Place, the radical tailor of Charing Cross, and the London Working Men's Association were deeply involved

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[13] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester, 1959), p. 138.

[14] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour* (London, 1964), p. 26.

[15] Harrison, "Drink and Sobriety," pp. 228-229.

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in the temperance controversy in the early 1830s. It was an interest in teetotalism which brought the wealthy tailor and the radicals of the LWMA together. This coalescence led Harrison to conclude that "the most important context in which to discuss the temperance movement however is in relation to the evolution of the labour movement, if only because temperance is seldom discussed by 'labour historians'."[16]

In 1841 the Leeds Total Abstinance Charter Association was organized, and a Sunday school was opened through the joint efforts of Chartists and teetotalers for the education of working men.[17] In Glasgow Chartism attracted the support of temperance reformers in the city, and there were pockets of Chartist temperance enthusiasm in the West and Southwest of Scotland.[18] Similar efforts at cooperation appeared thoughout the 1840s. Thomas Cooper, the radical Chartist of Leicester, delivered teetotal sermons to his fellow radicals and organised a teetotal section

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[16] Harrison, "Drink and Sobriety," p. 228.

[17] Asa Briggs, *Chartist Studies* (London, 1959), pp. 81-82.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 255, 260. In England during the 1830s there was, as one historian has noted, "a general moral primness ... to be found in most quarters. It was, particularly, the ideology of the artisan or of the skilled worker who had held his position in the face of the boisterous unskilled tide." E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1966), pp. 740-741.

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of the Charter Association in the city.[19] Thomas Cook was a vigorous temperance agitator who established a special temperence boarding house for laboring men also in Leicester.[20] Cook began his world-famous excursion business by chartering a special train to take passengers from Leicester to Loughborough for a temperance rally in 1841.[21]

The strength of "moral" Chartism lay in the medium-sized industrial towns and in the older industrial villages where visible signs of decay were apparent by 1830.[22] Total abstinence from spirits suggested social and economic mobility in the older "unrevolutionized" crafts where workers were beginning to sink to a subsistance-level income.[23] The administration of the teetotal pledge was a symbolic attempt to end the hold of the public house over the life of the worker and free him from an impoverishing social evil. Radicals such as Henry Vincent, George Julian Harney, and Jack Frost supported both the National Charter Association and the early temperance movement in their struggle to advance the individual liberty of the industrial worker.

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[19] A. Temple Patterson, Radical Leicester (Leicester, 1954), p. 318.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 268.

[21] G. M. Young, Early Victorian England, II (London, 1934), p. 310.

[22] F. C. Mather, Chartism (London, 1965), pp. 8-10.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

A new spirit of "moral sobriety" came out of the reform atmosphere in England during the decade which marked the end of Napoleonic Europe. This spirit, E. P. Thompson writes, was "demonstrably a product of the Radical and rationalist agitation itself; and owed much to the Old Dissenting and Jacobin traditions."[24] Moral sobriety imbued middle-class merchants and manufacturers with a new concern for the well-being of the venerable poor. For them temperance was a practical solution to the problem of social misery arising from economic dependence. Henry Hunt, John Bright, William Cobbett, and Richard Cobden were examples of middle-class reformers infected with the spirit of "moral sobriety".

Reformers such as Cobden and Bright saw sobriety as the essential key to any successful scheme for ending the poverty of the producing classes. Richard Cobden, in a letter to the father of teetotalism, Joseph Livesey, wrote that "the temperance cause really lies at the root of all social and political progression in this country."[25]

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[24] Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, p. 740.

[25] John Morley, The Life of Richard Cobden, II (London, 1908), p. 25.

"It is here," he continued, "that I have often been struck with the inferiority of our working people...."[26] Happily, however, every year marked a diminished proportion of heavy drinkers among the working classes because of the successes of the temperance movement.

Writing to Henry Ashworth, another temperance enthusiast, Cobden noted in 1849 that "The moral force of the masses lies in the temperance movement, and I confess I have no faith in anything apart from that movement for the elevation of the working class."[27] At the same time he was able to find inspiration in the success of the American temperance movement:

> We do not sufficiently estimate the amount of crime, vice, poverty, ignorance, and destitution which springs from the drinking habits of the people. The Americans have a clearer perception of the evils of drunkenness upon the political and material prospects of the people, and their leading men set an example of temperance on all public occasions.[28]

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[26] Morley, Richard Cobden, II, p. 26.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[28] *Ibid.* In keeping with the spirit of mid-Victorian Liberalism, Cobden, Bright, and others applied a *laissez faire* doctrine to the problem of intemperance. They supported teetotalism because it rested on an oath for voluntary abstention from hard spirits. It invoked moral suasion as the proper avenue to reform. They opposed prohibition because it called for the intervention of the State and the expansion of regulatory powers. This was the old Tory appeal in politics. Other middle-class

Caught up in the Anti-Corn Law agitation and the attack on sterile economic doctrine, Cobden believed that a moral and temperate working class would join with enlightened manufacturers and merchants to create a society free of vice and poverty.

John Bright began making temperance speeches to crowds of working men in the early 1830s. At Rochdale he advised an audience of workers that only hard work and sobriety could bring permanent social improvement:

> There is only one way that is safe for any man, or any number of men, by which they can maintain their present position if it be a good one, or raise themselves above it if it be a bad one--that is by the practice of the virtues of industry, frugality, temperance and honesty.[29]

This was a concise statement of the formula for non-revolutionary mobility which middle-class reformers urged upon more ambitious members of the laboring classes. Reformers such as Bright were certain that what temperance, honesty, industry, and frugality had done for them it could do for any aspiring worker who was willing to practice the same individualistic habits.

Liberals refused to accept this ideological limitation on moral reform.

[29] Quoted in Samuel Smiles, Self-Help (New York, 1878), pp. 324-325.

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John Bright's sister, Mrs. Margaret Bright Lucas, was the first president of the World Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the leader of the Woman's Temperance Association of Great Britain.[30] Mrs. Lucas, as spokesman for the woman's temperance movement in England, was the fellow-worker and friend of Frances E. Willard, president of the American Woman's Christian Temperance Union. When Bright refused to support enforced prohibition rather than moral suasion, his sister continued her affiliation with the feminist wing of the prohibition movement.[31]

Unlike the Bright-Cobden reformers, the United Kingdom Alliance called for direct state intervention and the passage of a "Maine Law" to curb the evil of insobriety. The membership of the UKA was overwhelmingly recruited from the middle class, while its appeals were directed to the working classes.[32] The major British prohibitionist society in the nineteenth century, it was organized in Manchester in 1853. Its greatest source of contributions and membership was the city of Manchester, with Birmingham,

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[30] Frances E. Willard, "Work of the W.C.T.U.," in Annie N. Meyer, Woman's Work in America, Arno Reprint, (New York, 1891), p. 410.

[31] Herman Ausubel, John Bright: Victorian Reformer (New York, 1966), pp. 191-193.

[32] Harrison, "British Prohibitionists, 1853-1872," p. 375.

Liverpool, Leeds, and Sheffield following in importance by the 1870s. Situated in the newer industrial cities, the UKA was dominated by enterprising manufacturers and prosperous merchants. Of those who contributed £5 or more for the year 1868-69, 23% were textile manufacturers, while bankers, grocers, ironfounders, and textile merchants made up the other occupational contributors.[33] Almost half of the group came from the Society of Friends (Quakers), and Anglicans, Wesleyans, Congregationalists, and Baptists equalled 40%.[34] As Harrison noted, "Positioned midway between two predatory social forces of aristocracy and pauperism, respectable members of the middle and working class were strongly attracted to the Alliance."[35]

Among the most influential of the supporters of the Alliance was George Cadbury, the cocoa magnate of Birmingham.[36] A Liberal and Quaker, he latter contributed heavily to the Independent Labour Party and sought to fuse the Liberal and Labour parties for the success of humane social legislation. Cadbury established a model factory for his employees and granted a half-day Saturday for their leisure, although he insisted on beginning each work day with a short religious service. Other wealthy middle-class supporters included Charles Watson, a manufacturer of ventilators, Joseph Lingford, and Harper Twelvetrees.[37] In addition to their dedication to the prohibition movement, they were advocates of housing reform, adult education, and Liberal politics.

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[33] Ibid., p. 387.

[34] Ibid., p. 407.

[35] Ibid., pp. 391-392.

[36] Ibid., pp. 450-451.

The Englishman most closely identified with the promotion of hard work, thrift, and sobriety was Samuel Smiles, who addressed his best seller, Self-Help, to the working men of England. "Simple industry and thrift," he wrote, "will go far towards making any person of ordinary working faculty comparatively independent in his means."[38] Smiles argued that the man who worked hard, saved his earnings, and wasted no money on drink was the man who had the best chance of getting ahead in a competitive industrial society. Self-Help was a handbook of advice for upward mobility, reinforced by historical examples. The "man who is always hovering on the verge of want," Smiles warned, "is in a state not far removed from that of slavery."[39]

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[37] Ibid., pp. 387-388.

[38] Smiles, op. cit., p. 337.

[39] Ibid., p. 326.

The predisposition to view temperance reform, and even prohibitionism, as a part of the radical tradition of the first decades of the nineteenth century was firmly set in the moral and emotional outlook which British and Irish immigrants brought with them to the United States. English workers, such as Richard Trevellick, immediately set to work preaching the gospel of sobriety to urban laborers upon their arrival. They were joined by American labor leaders who shared the same values and espoused the same message. After 1830, when the degradation of the journeyman was already apparent, temperance promised not only social improvement, but also a new image for the working man in industrial society. Sober habits gave not only self-respect to the worker; it guaranteed him the popular respect of society in general.

American Beginnings

Frank Thistlethwaite, in The Angle-American Connection in the Early Nineteenth Century, called particular attention to the close relationship between the British and American temperance movements. "The temperance movement," he writes, "was a peculiarly Anglo-American contribution to the reform of morals."[40] In the United States the early temperance movement was a major factor in the complex of ante-bellum reform ideas, and the work of leaders like Neal Dow and Lyman Beecher was well-known and widely admired in England. Several temperance societies, such as the Rechabites, Father Mathew societies, and Blue Ribbon Armies, were founded jointly in the United States and in England. Many of the immigrant English workers belonged to the old temperance lodges, the Good Templars or the Sons of Temperance for example, and in the case of the Irish workers, the Father Mathew societies which were established in the 1840s.

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[40] Frank Thistlethwaite, The Anglo-American Connection in the Early Nineteenth Century (Philadelphia, 1959), p. 92.

David Montgomery in his study of labor and the Radical Republicans gathered specific biographical information on ninety-six prominent labor leaders between 1862 and 1872.[41] The percentage of foreign-born leaders in his sample was 44.8%. The dominate ethnic makeup of the foreign-born group was British: English (31.4%), Irish (25.6%), Welsh and Scottish (12.1% each). Within this elite of the labor leadership there were several important labor-temperance spokesmen: Andrew Cameron of the Workingman's Advocate, Ralph Beaumont of the Knights of Labor and the Greenback Labor Party, and Richard Trevellick, a national organizer for the Knights of Labor. Scottish-born John James was an influential temperance leader among the Illinois miners,

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[41] David Montgomery, Beyond Equality: Labor and the Radical Republicans (New York, 1967), pp. 462-469. The percentages are based on the author's data.

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and in 1873 he was elected secretary of the Miners' National Association.[42] A second source of temperance enthusiasm among British immigrants was found in the old non-conformist sectarianism, especially that of the Methodist variety. Richard Hinchcliffe and Thomas Phillips were both Methodists interested in the cause of temperance. As Montgomery noted, "Hand in hand with the doctrine of free agency came the cause of temperance."[43]

The concern of the temperance movement in the United States for the working man developed in the late 1820s and anticipated the arrival of sober-minded immigrant workers later in the century. The American Temperance Society, based primarily in New England and New York, appealed for abstention and moral sobriety through the agency of the churches and in a style shaped by evangelical zeal. Organized in 1826, the society appealed upon occasion to the laboring man to observe the rule of abstention from all intoxicants, and appealed to New England ship owners to encourage sobriety among their sailors by replacing the grog or rum ration with a less harmful drink.[44] The society made a special effort to dispel the folk belief that the consumption of spirits increased a worker's capacity to labor. The society reprinted and circulated the speech of Dr. John Ware to the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance. Ware urged workers to substitute cold water for hard spirits:

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[42] *Ibid.*, p. 465.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

[44] *Permanent Temperance Documents of the American Temperance Society*, I (Boston, 1835), pp. 34,35.

> It is an impression almost universal among the laboring classes, that ardent spirits, if not absolutely necessary, are, at least, of great use and importance, as a support during labor; and that moderately used, they are a salutary, or, at least innocent stimulus. But no impression can be more unfounded, no opinion more fatally false, than that which attributes to spirituous liquors any power of promoting bodily strength, or supporting the system under labor or fatigue. Experience has in all quarters most abundantly proved the contrary.[45]

The American Temperance Society also reminded American workers of the warm sympathy English laborers were demonstrating on behalf of the temperance issue.

In 1835 the celebrated address of the mechanics of Preston, England, in favor of teetotalism was published by the society. The address urged all artisans and mechanics to "shun the public house as you would do a plague, and the company of drunkards as you would a gang of robbers."[46] In words inspired by Livesey's Preston Temperance Advocate, the mechanics called for voluntary abstention from ale and wine as well as all hard spirits.

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[45] Ibid., p. 9.

[46] Ibid., pp. 484-486; see Appendix I, pp. 327-328.

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Among the thirty signers of the appeal were weavers, spinners, shoemakers, moulders, and a plasterer.

Four years earlier, 1831, the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance published "A Letter to the Mechanics of Boston" asking all master and journeymen mechanics to lend their support in urging the working men of the city to adhere to the principle of sobriety.[47] Fidelity to the temperance ideal would diminish the pauper rolls, empty the almshouse, and vacate the house of correction. It was acknowledged, the appeal stated, "that, if the poverty which arises from intemperance can be cured, or prevented, all the other poverty of our city, and our country, could easily be provided for."[48] Boston's working men were urged to use their influence to secure the passage of a state probhition law.

One of the authors of this appeal was Lemuel Shaw, who later became an influential Whig jurist in Massachusetts. Shaw wrote the state supreme court decision in the case of Commonwealth v. Hunt(1841), a ruling which held that trade unions were not illegal combinations, or criminal conspiracies, but lawful associations for the benefit of workers.

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[47] Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, A Letter to the Mechanics of Boston (Boston, 1831), p. 3.

[48] Ibid., p. 9.

Between 1830 and 1860 the rise of merchant capitalism and the displacement of the journeyman mechanic inspired economic unrest and political protest. Working men organized mechanics unions, ten-hour day leagues, and joined labor parties to enter politics in states such as New York and Pennsylvania.[49] In the large urban centers by 1860 there was a sharp differentiation of social class characterized by neighborhoods reflecting income and occupational status. In pre-Civil War Philadelphia, based on the research of Stuart Blumin, economic change was clearly in the direction of polarized social classes. By 1860 there was a definite wage-earning class and the city "was a society of extreme economic stratification."[50]

The strikes of the Jacksonian period, long hours, low or declining wages, insecurity, and rivalry between masters and journeymen prompted a vigorous criticism of the social order.[51] On the eve of the Civil War the threat of severe pauperism seemed more pervasive than at any time since the founding of the Republic.

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[49] Edward Pessen, Most Uncommon Jacksonians: The Radical Leaders of the Early Labor Movement (Albany, 1967), pp. 9-19.

[50] Stuart Blumin, "Mobility and Change in Ante-Bellum Philadelphia," Nineteenth-Century Cities, ed. by Stephen Thernstrom and Richard Sennett (New Haven, 1969), pp. 203-206.

[51] Walter Hugins, Jacksonian Democracy and the Working Class: A Study of the New York Workingmen's Movement, 1829-1837 (Stanford, 1960), pp. 53-58.

The Civil War marked a crucial transition in the history of the American worker. Inflation, the willingness of states to intervene in strikes, and the Contract Labor Law of 1864 led to a rapid increase in the number of unions by the end of the war. The conscription act was unpopular with poorer citizens who were unable to hire substitutes to fulfill the obligations of military service, and Pennsylvania and New York experienced violent protests against the law in 1863. The aftermath of the war was characterized by disillusion and the threat of downward mobility. The consolidation of businesses, and the growth of regional markets into national ones, highlighted the old problems of poverty and intemperance. The labor-temperance leaders found much to do, for the American working man entered a critical period after 1865.

There was "gradually developing at the North a system of slavery as absolute if not as degrading as that which lately prevailed at the South," the New York Times noted in 1869.[52] The American working classes were being forced into "the same condition of absolute dependency, in which 22,000,000 of the English manufacturing and agricultural laborers now struggle." The general condition of the American worker was "one of want and suffering" from which only the skilled worker might hope to escape.

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[52] New York Times, February 22, 1869.

A sense of crisis was felt by workers living in the older manufacturing centers along the Atlantic seacoast. At Fall River, Massachusetts, the days of paternal concern for the happiness and welfare of the factory operative were gone. An employee of the Durfee Mills in Fall River recalled that after the Civil War there were no free lectures for the workers, no libraries, no amusements (other than "Jim Crow dances") to relieve fatigue and monotony at the end of the week.[53] "Everybody now knows," the worker stated, "that the educated American operative of the primary period of manufacturing (with its 'Lowell Offering') has become paleozoic and extinct...."[54] A clergyman of Lowell, Massachusetts, felt conditions were worsening and a caste-like system developing with workers forced to the bottom of the social structure.[55] The only improvements in Lowell were those in the machinery of production. The workers were "overtasked, exhausted and despondent humanity," the veritable "mudsills of society."

The resumption of a heavy European immigration after the Civil War incited a new ethnic competition for jobs and a nativistic reaction on the part of older workers who resented the presence of late arrivals. Fear and distrust of the newcomer disrupted the community and pitted worker against worker. A laborer at Lowell suggested there was a definite deterioration in the quality of the operative with the continuous arrival of new immigrants. Another worker recalled that the habits of the workers were "not as good as they were years ago, when a different class of help was employed."[56] A laborer at Fall River blamed much of the deepening industrial trouble on the Catholic immigrants in particular. The trouble would remain, he added, until the Catholic workers were driven out of town. He continued: "...if I could have my way I would give them no employment, and not permit them to purchase or hold a place for the burial of their dead."[57]

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[53] Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, *Documents of the Senate*, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1871, p. 461.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 462.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 474.

Against this background of economic deprivation, labor and temperance leaders voiced a new concern for the habits and morals of the working men and their families. With the decline of the older paternalistic attitude of company officials for their employees, workers' associations and trade unions devoted increased attention to the morals and "character" of the laborer. The obligation of the labor association was to create "a better condition at home, a better education, a better position in society."[58] The problem of intemperance became a critical issue in the reformation of the morals of the working class. The tasks of curbing insobriety and re-establishing "a better position in society" for the worker were readily assumed by the trade association and the newer labor union. "I can prove," a member of the Knights of St. Crispin stated, "that our Crispin organization has done more for temperance than all the temperance societies have done together."[59]

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[56] Ibid., p. 472.

[57] Ibid., p. 62.

The extent of insobriety among the industrial workers in the 1860s is difficult to determine. Accurate statistics were not kept before the Civil War, and it is impossible to estimate the consumption of illicitly manufactured alcoholic beverages. The pervasiveness of drinking patterns must be gleaned from representative accounts given by workers and are, therefore, subjective. Observers, however, were in substantial agreement that insobriety was a problem of major proportions and over-indulgence in drink a serious threat to the economic stability of the worker. The problem of intemperance was made more pressing by the demands of a new industrial society for a sober and well-disciplined industrial work force.

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[58] Ibid., p. 39.

[59] Ibid., p. 34.

The use of alcoholic beverages was governed by social convention and folk belief. Tradtionally, liquor was served at most important social and family functions such as marriages, baptisms, dances, and picnics. Beer and wine were generally regarded as nutritional beverages and their use was regulated by ethnic preference. Railroad construction workers were given a regular "jigger" ration, in addition to wages, on the assumption that rum or whisky lightened the toil and the workers were happier. A cut in the ration, or its abolition, brought immediate protest and the threat of a walk-out or strike.

It was a common custom among the anthracite miners of Pennsylvania to take a day's supply of whisky down into the mines at the start of each shirt. As late as the end of the century mine foremen kept seven to ten per-cent more workers than needed because of the unreliability of inebriate miners.[60] In order to protect temperate workers company towns often sought to exclude saloons, which only exaccerbated the saloon problem in nearby communities.

One of the witnesses before Senator Henry W. Blair's committee on the relations of labor and capital described the pervasiveness of the folk belief that liquor was necessary to any type of arduous labor. According to

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[60] Peter Roberts, Anthracite Coal Communities (New York, 1904), p. 206.

Sylvester Marsh of Concord, New Hampshire:

> Well, rum was just as common a drink as water. There was no building raised, no funeral that occured, nor anthing ealse hardly without rum ....A man could go to the store and be trusted for rum in case of sickness when they would not trust him for anything else, because they considered it a necessary thing.[61]

Marsh worked on the construction of the Mount Washington Railroad and knew the social habits of his fellow workers well.

Thomas Wolf, from Fall River, gave similar testimony before the committee, but he suggested that the belief that alcoholic beverages nourished and strengthened the worker was a common prejudice brought over to the new country from the old. The popular taste for alcoholic beverages among workers, he remarked, was "an old custom, introduced by old-country people like myself."[62] While the custom was wide-spread, Wolf refused to acknowledge the habit as a serious economic problem:

> In England, where I was reared, the habit was for a man, when he drew his pay every Saturday night, to go in and enjoy himself. He was not considered a drunkard; neither do I consider the people of Fall River drunkards. They are nothing of the kind.[63]

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[61] U. S. Congress, Senate, Senate Committee on Education and Labor, Relations Between Capital and Labor, III, 48th Congress (1885), pp. 610-611.

[62] Ibid., p. 631.

[63] Ibid.

Social drinking was one of the popular forms of recreation and relaxation in mill towns such as Fall River, and the custom and ritual of the saloon filled an important cultural void in the life of the industrial worker.

In an effort to gain factual information on the drinking patterns of American workers the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics prepared a survey on the social welfare of the worker in the commonwealth. One object of the survey was to inquire into "the habits of working people in temperance, recreation, observance of the Sabbath ...and their general reputation in the community in which they live."[64] Based on the evidence of the survey many working people saw nothing wrong with spending part of Saturday's wages in the local tavern or saloon. They viewed such expenditures as a legitimate use of leisure and a convenient form of escape from industrial drudgery.

J. R. Perry, paymaster of the Everett Mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts, informed the state labor bureau that the spinners of the town were "a rowdy, drinking unprincipled set."[65] Any concession in the form of greater leisure, shortening the work day from ten to eight hours for example, would be detrimental to the worker and

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[64] Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics, p. 7.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. p. 469.

"wasted and rioted away." Perry suggested that if workers were kept at work fourteen hours a day it would be better for them.[66] While he defended the influence of the factory as "favorable upon the morals of the community," he admitted that 90% of the spinners, who were mostly English or Irish, were intemperate.[67] The policy of the Everett Mills was to discharge all intemperate workers, and in most company towns it was easy to see who staggered home under the sway of intoxication.

James Dawson Burns, the English temperance advocate, called attention to the heavy regimentation of American factory workers. Skilled laborers, like the hatters, were worked at a rapid pace under the piece-rate system. The hatters, he wrote:

> belong to the class who labour like horses with the lash continually held over them, and many of them drink like savages. So far as my own experience is in question, I have rarely known one of these extremely fast workmen who could make it convenient to save a cent. As they made their money, they spent it, and in a manner which showed that they were thoroughly regardless of the contingencies of health or continual employment.[68]

If factory labor was almost too much for body and soul to accept, habitual intoxication only made it worse.

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid.

[68] James Dawson Burns, Three Years Among the Working

Although little is known about the dietary habits and the nutrient intake of American workers in the 1870s, it is quite possible that workers drank heavily in part to supplement a steady consumption of carbohydrates and fats. D. J. Oddy, in his study of working-class diets in late nineteenth-century Britain, found that families of poor workers relied greatly on bread, cereals, and potatoes.[69] During the late 1880s the average weekly consumption of bread was almost seven pounds per person, while the intake of meat was 1.5 lbs. per capita or even less.[70] Drinking helped to alleviate the "stodgy diet" of the worker and added a different taste to his otherwise rather unpalatable food. Dawson Burns urged workers to eat a heavy early breakfast, for it was "calculated in no small degree to prevent that craving for intoxicating liquors."[71]

Not everyone accepted the idea that workers were by nature rowdy and intemperate. Laboring men often defended themselves from the charge that they were irresponsible and unreliable because of wide-spread intoxication.

Classes in the United States During the War, as quoted in John R. Commons and others, *A Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, Russell and Russell Reprint, VI, Pt. I (New York, 1958), p. 58.

[69] D. J. Oddy, "Working-Class Diet in Late Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Economic History Review*, 23(1970), pp. 314-315.

[70] *Ibid*., p. 320.

[71] *Ibid*., p. 318.

Isaiah Sanderson, a Fall River spinner, believed that the operatives were temperate and worked "to make everybody temperate."[72] A citizen of Marlborough, Massachusetts, testified that workers were as orderly as any group of mixed nationalities could be: "As a class they are temperate. Many of them belong to temperance organizations. The Irish society and the two divisions of the Sons of Temperance are mostly patronized by the laboring classes."[73] Even those workers who regularly consumed alcoholic beverages of one type or another, seldom admitted that their intemperate habits were a primary cause of poverty.

The debate over whether poverty produced intemperance or intemperance led to poverty is crucial to understanding the temperance movement after the Civil War. Laborers often tended to blame poverty for the pervasive pattern of drinking among members of the working classes. The social survey of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics agreed with this conclusion:

> ...drunkeness [will not] disappear till society shall itself be regenerated by the discontinuance of the present mode of distributing the wealth produced by labor, [until] both extreme riches and extreme poverty become memories of past generations, strange, incredible and unpleasant to dwell upon.[74]

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[72] *Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics*, p. 62.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[74] *Ibid.*, pp. 550-551.

Intemperance was a major problem and one which trade unions and associations of workers were willing to confront. But behind insobriety was an inequitable economic system which impoverished the worker and forced him to seek escape by way of intoxication. Moral suasion and voluntary teetotalism could deal with the immediate problem, but in the end poverty must be abolished before intemperance would disappear.

In another respect, however, industrialization made insobriety a national problem. It was one thing to tolerate rowdy and free-drinking frontiersmen and "brown jug" politics, but it was another to cope with pauper rolls swelled with intemperate and unemployed fathers, mine explosions caused by inebriate miners, and industrial accidents brought on by tipsy operatives. The competition for jobs and the wage system contributed to the anxieties of the worker. John G. Woolley of Wisconsin, one-time Prohibition presidential candidate, summed up the new attitude toward intemperance as a social evil: "On the farm, in the mill, the shop, the factory, in the mine, on the sea, every where labour must be stimulated to activity by alcohol. This is now as antiquated as the spinning wheel or hand-loom."[75]

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[75] John G. Woolley and William E. Johnson, Temperance Progress in the Century (Philadelphia, 1903), p. 387.

British labor-temperance leaders joined with their American counterparts to preach a vigorous message of temperance and moral sobriety to American working men in the decade which followed the Civil War. Industrial society demanded workers with "clear heads and steady nerves" and so did the many movements designed to change some of the worst features of that society. Ralph Beaumont, Richard Trevellick, William H. Sylvis, Terence V. Powderly, and Charles Wilson joined in a common struggle to end the oppression of insobriety and to free the American worker from an impoverishing social habit. The first attack on the intemperance of the working class in America by organized labor was launched by the National Labor Union under the leadership of William H. Sylvis.

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CHAPTER II

TEMPERANCE REFORM AND THE NATIONAL LABOR UNION, 1866-1880

The recognition of temperance reform came before several of the ante-bellum reform conventions, but when raised it seemingly offered too few benefits to attract the sustained attention of most workers before the Civil War. The committee which issued the call for the Industrial Congress of 1845 noted that "Temperance reformers have done much good" but their efforts were offset by "the great inducements to accumulate wealth by a traffic injurious to society."[1] Temperance reform, it was further noted, did not succeed among the profligate rich or challenge the dispair of the poor. As a reform it suffered from "the merely animal education that is the lot of the mass."[2]

During the first years of temperance agitation among working men after the Civil War there were attempts to uncover the underlying causes of insobriety. The old ambiguity about the origins of the social or moral forces which promoted intemperance was re-examined. There were those who blamed insobriety on the stresses of a competitive economic system. Others placed the blame for intemperance on the individual habits of workers who squandered their surplus pennies on drink. Reformers of the former persuasion looked upon those who pressed individual reformation as short-sighted practitioners treating symptoms rather than causes. The question which came first, poverty or intemperance, proved vexing. Opnions divided those who blamed intemperance for poverty and those who blamed poverty for intemperance. The conflict produced reformers who concentrated on the reformation of habits and morals, and those who attacked the economic system which produced the conditions which led to working-class intoxication. The first group of temperance agitators resorted to moral suasion, the second to political action.

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[1] John R. Commons, et. al., Documentary History, Vol. XIII, Pt. 2, p. 24.

[2] Ibid.

In 1867 a group of labor reformers met at Worcester, Massachusetts, to hear an address by Amassa Walker on the reform movement in New England. At the conclusion of the meeting a resolution was passed which in part stated that the "removal of prostitution, intemperance, war and other social evils can never be effectively accomplished until justice is done to labor."[3] It was not so much society's obligation, the resolution continued, "to arrest the thief, the drunkard, or the prostitute, as to arrest the circumstances which allow or compel them to be such."[4] The indictment of the economic order as the primary cause for the deterioration of the habits and morals of the worker was not universally shared in the years immediately following the war. The National Labor Union and those workers who supported it often dissented from this view to stress the individualistic responsibility of the working man for his own status in society.

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[3] Workingman's Advocate(Chicago), September 12, 1867. Hereafter cited as WA.

The National Labor Union

In August 1866 delegates from the Grand Eight Hour League, Coachmakers, Iron Molders, Stone Cutters, Carpenters, Blacksmiths, and representatives from local trade assemblies and eight hour leagues met in Baltimore to organize the National Labor Union. When the preliminary plans were made it was decided that the eight hour question would be the first order of business.[5] The call for the assembly made it clear that "other business" might be considered, but the demand for the eight hour day was to be the founding principle of the NLU.

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Commons, et. al., Documentary History, Vol. IX, Pt. I, p. 126.

When the delegates convened they divided into committees on the eight hour day, cooperation, trade unions and strikes, and a committee on resolutions. From the first the emphasis was on reform. The committee on the eight hour question proposed that all delegates return home "to agitate the 'eight hour' question, publicly and privately, and to effect some plan of organization whereby we may secure the combined strength of the working men... to effect this great labor reform...."[6] The shorter working day, the committees argued, would allow more time "for moral, intellectual and social culture" and bring the worker "a step higher in the scale of moral and intellectual life."[7] The endorsement of temperance subsequently became an important argument made by William Sylvis and others in support of the eight hour day, one designed to counter the criticism that workers would only idle away their new leisure in dissipation.

The "Address to Workingmen" issued in 1867 set forth the major reform aspirations of the National Labor Union. The chairman of the committee on address was Andrew C. Cameron, editor of the Workingman's Advocate of Chicago and Cincinnati. Cameron, the son of a Scottish Chartist printer who emigrated to the United States, was editor of of the newspaper from 1864 until 1880. In its pages he popularized the old values of "moral force" Chartism which he learned from his father.[8] Hard work, frugality, and sobriety were continually emphasized through editorials, didactic stories, essays, and poems. Cameron and Sylvis agreed that the only way the American worker could hope to improve his status was through self-help techniques and a moral character. In 1869 he was the NLU's delegate to the International Workingmen's Association convention in Basle, Switzerland, although he later refused to endorse the principles of the ILU.[9]

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[6] Ibid., pp. 134-135.
[7] Ibid., p. 134.

The 1867 statement of reform tenets discussed the eight hour day, cooperatives, trade unions, the apprenticeship system, strikes, female labor, Negro labor, the public domain, and political action. The prospect of seeking political solutions to these issues was made clear during the first year of the National Labor Union. Cameron urged the working classes of America "to discard the clap-trap issues of the past" and recognise "that a new era has been ushered in."[10] Working men, he continued,

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[8] Roy Boston, British Chartists in America, 1839-1900 (Manchester, 1971), p. 96; Montgomery, Beyond Equalit p. 463.

[9] Philip S. Foner, History of the Labor Movement in the United States, Vol. I, pp. 412-413.

[10] John R. Commons, Documentary History, Vol. IX, Pt. I, p. 166.

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"are fast rousing from the lethargy in which they have been sunk. They are realizing that, as the evils which weigh with crushing effect upon society, are legislative in character, that the remedy must therefore be legislative."[11] Worth not wealth, Cameron suggested, should rule the country.

Gerald Grob described the ideology of the NLU as "reform unionism".[12] The reformist spirit of the national craft movement depended still upon the schemes of Jacksonian and ante-bellum agrarian-labor leaders of the stature of George Henry Evans. The NLU, Grob wrote, "aimed at restoring equal opportunity for all."[13] After 1870 many of the craft unions dropped out of the organization and by 1876 the National Labor Union ceased to attract the support of laboring artisans or mechanics.

Because it was not a class-conscious organization dominated by a narrow economic ideology, the National Labor Union was open to most of the reform ideas of the 1860s and 1870s. While temperance reform never intruded in its national conventions, sobriety was advocated to enhance numerous individual reforms. Temperance promoted cooperation by enabling workers to save more from their wages to invest in cooperative enterprises. Sober workers, of course, would have the money to subscribe to the newspapers and journals published in the interest of the producing classes. Sobriety enhanced the claims made for "popular government" and the creation of "a true democracy" in America by the working classes. Honesty, dedication to the common weal, intelligence, and temperance were prerequisites for good government. In almost every way the observance of temperate behavior and sobriety contributed to the reforms advocated by the NLU to ameliorate the conditions engendered by the wage system and the threatened status of laboring men.

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[11] Ibid., pp. 165-166.

[12] Gerald Grob, "Reform Unionism: The National Labor Union," Journal of Economic History, XIV (1954), pp. 127-142.

[13] Ibid., p. 127.

Even though temperance reform was never officially endorsed by the conventions of the National Labor Union it was very much a part of the reform orientation which the organization's leaders articulated. The Workingman's Advocate, the major journal of labor sentiments between 1866 and 1876, was deeply committed to the cause of temperance reform. Cameron rejected the idea that working men were by nature intemperate, or habitually inclined to visit the haunts of gin mills and grog shops, and the journal reflected his views with faithful regularity. In reply to a charge by the church publication Advance, the Workingman's Advocate acknowledged that crime, intemperance, and poverty were wide-spread, but argued that the economic system of America was to blame. "If men are chained to the earth by debased appetites and depraved habits," the paper stated, "these vices are but the legitimate offspring of a system...."[14] The fault rested with the system of industrial capitalism which treated man as little more than an adjunct to a machine, a tread in a consuming and insatiable process of production.

Young men coming from the farm to the city were constantly drawn into what the Advocate described as the "cycle of misfortune." When the young mechanic could not find a job~~,~~ or hold one for long, he turned to the saloon were there was warmth and three-cent beer. It was only a short time until he joined the ranks of the vagrants and tramping unemployed, another victim of the social and economic system.[15]

The newspaper of the NLU estimated that working men spent $1,550,000 every year for intoxicants in one form or another, and for tobacco, which was only slightly less harmful.[16] Cut these expenditures, the Advocate urged, and spend hard-earned wages on more productive goods. If one-fifth of the annual expenditures for drink were invested in cooperative enterprises there would be no doubt as to their success. One commentator estimated that a worker who bought two drinks a day, at the price of .10¢ a drink, spent $45.00 dollars a year more for spirits than his family spent for bread.[17] "No matter how hard the times are," the Advocate stated, "a stray ten cents can generally be found whenever a glass of whisky is desired. There is evidently something rotten in Denmark."[18]

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[14] WA, October, 19, 1867.
[15] WA, July 7, 1866.
[16] WA, June 19, 1869.

The refusal of working men to save their wages, and to confine their spending to necessary purchases, was frustrating to labor-temperance reformers. The Workingman's Advocate urged its readers to avoid spending needed income on intoxicants:

> We are not writing an essay on temperance, nor advocating total abstinence, although we believe in it. Our only object is to show to the workingmen of the country where so much of their money goes--to show them the vast sums spent in a manner that yields nothing but disease and death.[19]

By indictment and example the journal of Cameron and the NLU hoped to dissuade artisans and mechanics from intemperance. In keeping with the effort to persuade workers to pursue temperate habits, they were warned of the terrible consequences of drunkenness. "Strong drink drags a man down from his high estate, depraves all his appetites, and leaves him in want and misery, the mere wreck and semblance of man," the newspaper stated in 1870.[20]

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[17] WA, February, 5, 1870.
[18] WA, July 31, 1875.
[19] WA, June 19, 1869.

In 1870 the Workingman's Advocate refused to publish an anti-temperance tract sent to it by one of its readers. In rejecting the offer to publish the tract, the editor wrote: "We advocate or countenance no movement that has not for its object the elevation and amelioration of the condition of those who labor for a living."[21] If the anti-temperance forces, the editor suggested, would send the name and address of a drunkard or a drunkard's wife who ever regretted the signing of the temperance pledge, the editor would reconsider. On the contrary, the journal pointed out, the liquor traffic makes a drunkard "a slave to a depraved appetite, an appetite which robs him of manhood, erases every particle of self-respect...."[22]

The saloon and the pawn shop were as representative of the worker's plight after the Civil War as any other symbols of his society. Workers were urged to vote for the politician who had no ties with the saloon interests, and who was temperate in his own habits. Anticipating the injunction of the Anti-Saloon League, workers were told that "he who tastes, touches, or handles not the soul-damning beverages is the only man who we would trust in any position of responsibility."[23] Saloons were castigated as "carbuncles on the body politic." Pawn brokers were hardly viewed more favorably than the saloon owner. They were "lazy, soulless usurers" who cooperated with the saloon-keepers to rob the worker. "It is a well-known fact," the Workingman's Advocate commented, "that where one article is pawned from necessity, a dozen are pawned to obtain drink...."[24]

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[20] WA, February 5, 1870.
[21] WA, April 9, 1870.
[22] WA, July 28, 1866.

The role of the NLU's newspaper as the defender of the principle and practice of temperance brought it to the side of temperance agitators within the working classes. In a vigorous attack on intemperance Delegate Warr of Forge No. 2 of Illinois, Iron Puddlers National Union, blamed excessive intoxication as a major factor in the decline of the United Sons of Vulcan. In a speech which the Workingman's Advocate described as "able and timely," Warr characterized intemperance as the "scourge of our order" and the "great monster".[25] Show me a puddler, he told his audience, and I will show you a tippler! "If you would have the respect and moral support of an intelligent community (without which you are shorn of no inconsiderable element of strength), you must put down this gigantic evil," Warr told his audience.[26]

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[23] WA, July 28, 1866.
[24] WA, June 18, 1870.
[25] WA, November 2, 1872.

In assessing the effects of intemperance on his own craft union, which were "proverbial," and the burden of insobriety on the working classes in general, Warr argued that excessive intoxication gave employers an excuse for keeping wages low. By tippling "you lose all sympathy of your employer, and cut off all desire on his part to keep up prices. He, very naturally, comes to the conclusion that he and they are better off when wages are at a more reduced standard...."[27] Furthermore, excessive intoxication always cost workers the valuable support of friends and sympathizers in the community when it was most needed.

In 1868 Grand Chief Engineer Charles Wilson made a similar plea to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. As a craft union, he told them, we cannot advance without the principle of temperance, or even total abstinence.[28] He expressed personal satisfaction with the efforts of several sub-divisions of the Engineers to promote the cause of sobriety during the past year. As men who practice temperance "the sooner we shall be recognized as men every way worthy of the responsible positions we occupy," Wilson added.[29]

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] WA, October 31, 1868.

The Workingman's Advocate praised the efforts of the Father Mathew Society among Irish workers, going so far as to describe the society as "another labor organization." A correspondent of the society wrote that his branch had about 200 members who had taken the pledge even though it was a "poor man's society."[30] Meetings were held in the Irish-American Hall every Sunday evening where members listened to lectures and readings. "It would be a great blessing," he wrote, "were every man and woman in this city similarly engaged; if they were, our police courts might thus be ended, and the penitentiary let out for a factory to be carried on by honest men."[31]

In Joliet, Illinois, working men organized a temperance society which met regularly in the basement of the Catholic Church with its own literary society.[32] In 1867 the Machinists and Blacksmiths International Union selected Temperance Hall in Detroit for their meeting place to avoid the unsavory proximity of saloons.[33] Such efforts were given notable publicity by the *Workingman's Advocate* and earned the praise of the National Labor Union's leadership.

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[29] Ibid.
[30] WA, January 11, 1873.
[31] Ibid.
[32] WA, April 12, 1873.
[33] WA, October 12, 1867.

William H. Sylvis on Intemperance

Educated in the hard school of Pennsylvania politics and labor activities, William Sylvis was elected president of the National Labor Union in 1868.[34] He was born in Armagh, Pennsylvania, and apprenticed to a Whig legislator of the state at the age of nine. As an official of the National Union of Iron Molders Sylvis was instrumental in establishing a model craft union and advancing the concept of working class unity.[35] He worked closely with Andrew Cameron in 1868 and 1869, when he died, to popularize the cause of temperance among all workers. Sylvis was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church and a "cold water" man in later life. He reflected the old alliance between the free moral agency of Methodism and the sobriety of "moral force" radicalism preached by Cameron.[36]

Sylvis joined a local temperance lodge and adopted the cold water platform which he espoused in his writings and speeches on the need for sobriety.[37] He warned both toilers and the upper classes that the consumption of hard spirits carried lethal results. "It destroys the intellect, kills the body, and demeans the soul," he wrote.[38] Unlike many other labor leaders and reformers, Sylvis perceived a sharply differentiated class structure in America, one divided between "the busy bees in the industrial hive, and the idle drones who fatten upon what they steal." His concern was the elevation of the poor man from poverty to respectability and economic security, and he saw abstention from intoxicants as a key lever in that elevatory process.[39].

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[34] David Montgomery, *Beyond Equality*, pp. 223-229.

[35] Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 237.

[36] James C. Sylvis, ed., *The Life, Speeches, Labors and Essays of William H. Sylvis* (Philadelphia, 1872), p. 88.

[37] *Ibid*., p. 89.

During the decade of the 1860s Sylvis was the most influential advocate of self-help in the American labor movement. Cooperation, he wrote, was the first step in self-help. Intent upon reviving the tradition of the educated American mechanic, he urged workers to establish their own lecture halls, libraries, and reading-rooms. He argued that the ten hour day left little time for anything other than eating and sleeping, and the need for "moral and intellectual culture" could be satisfied only by shortening the work day to eight hours. Working men were urged to save their wages, "economize; abstain from every excess, whether of drink or otherwise. Emancipate yourselves from poverty by privation."[40]

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

A major factor in the working man's poverty was the prevalence of intemperate habits. The poor man's home was always worse, he wrote, when "the husband is idle, intemperate, or improvident."[41] In a longer essay, "Grand Juries on Intemperance," Sylvis extended his indictment of inebriation as a primary cause of economic dependence. The traffic in alcoholic beverages was responsible for a large share of crime and sickness as well as general improvidence. The essay was directed to laboring men in particular and urged them to reform their habits in preparation for the coming of the eight-hour day:

> On workingmen, however, we would impress the necessity of sobriety above all others. It is the first step towards self-elevation. A temperate man wins confidence, he is trusted and depended upon, and is always the first to gain confidence and promotion. This fact is evidenced in every workshop. And now, while pleading for two additional hours of rest for mental culture and rational enjoyment, it is important that we convince our opponents that this time will be spent well. It has already been predicted that this leisure will be devoted to the dram-shop, or to other improper associations. We can at least relieve public apprehension in regard to this objection, by promptly abstaining from intoxicating drinks.[42]

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 117.
[41] *Ibid.*, p. 396.
[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 412-413.

Aside from the practical consideration of silencing the critics of a shorter day, Sylvis obviously believed that sobriety would permit the worker to live better, dress better, and eat better. The vice of insobriety, he added, only "makes the poor poorer."

Sylvis admired the work of John B. Gough, the leader of the cold-water temperance forces after the Civil War. Gough was particularly active in Boston and New England, andfarther to the south in Philadelphia. In 1869 the Workingman's Advocate printed selections from Gough's popular autobiography. A book-binder by trade, his temperance orations revived the old spirit of the Washingtonians and the Boston Temperance Society.[43] Gough condemned the practice of tippling among mechanics and recalled his own sad experiences as a drunken laborer.[44]

The common assumption which underscored the attacks on intemperance by both Sylvis and Gough was that habit determined the pattern of consumption. While individual habits were often so entrenched as to set a cultural trend, they believed that the inebriate had only to renounce his evil habit to be free of demon rum's curse. They never assumed, for example, that intoxication might have a physiological basis. This interpretation of insobriety corresponded to the popular attitudes expressed by boards of charities and overseers of the poor in regard to public drunkenness.

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[43] John B. Gough, Autobiography and Personal Recollections (Philadelphia, 1870), p. 119.

[44] Ibid., p. 95. In writing of his experience as a book-binder Gough recalled: "My custom now was to purchase my brandy--which, in consequence of my limited means, was of the very worst description--and keep it at the shop, where, by little and little, I drank it...."

The New York City Commissioners of Charities advised against maintaining an asylum for inebriates on Ward's Island on the grounds that excessive or habitual intoxication was not treatable as a disease, or at least not treatable at public expense. The report of the commission stated "that habitual drunkenness is not to be regarded as a disease, but a habit practically within the control of each individual case."[45] The asylum was subsequently closed and the patients returned to their homes for "reformation" of the habit. Applications for poor relief asked for information on intemperate habits, or a previous pattern of intoxication, and relief requests from known inebriates were usually rejected by the overseers, leaving the applicants to fend for themselves.[46]

Social and economic antagonisms prevented white and black workers from joining the National Labor Union on the basis of equal membership. In 1869 Sylvis reacted bitterly to the competition of freedmen with white labor and the Radicals' reconstruction of the South. He was incensed with the Freedmen's Bureau, which he desribed as a "huge swindle upon the honest workingmen of the country."[47] In his view the Bureau fed those who didn't want to work at the expense of those who did. "We go," he wrote, "for 'smashing the Bureau,' and making these lazy loafers work for a living, as other men do."[48] Yet, one principle upon which both the NLU and the National Colored Labor Union agreed was that intemperance constituted a monumental obstacle to the progress of the worker, whether Black or white.

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[45] J.J. Henley, "Report on the Poor Laws of Certain of the United States, and on the Combination There Of Private Charity with Official Relief(1877)," Area Studies, British Parliamentary Papers, United States of America, Vol. 51, Irish University Press (Shannon, 1971), p. 435.

[46] Ibid., p. 450.

The National Colored Labor Union

The first convention of the National Colored Labor Union, meeting in 1869, embraced many of the principles of white labor, but also stressed education, equal rights for Blacks, and temperance. Excessive drinking was attacked as the special burden of the working classes: "...intemperance is the natural foe and curse of the American family, especially among the working classes, its terrible effects being to disease, ...vice, crime, and poverty where peace and plenty would otherwise exist."[49] Affirming the belief that all labor was honorable, the convention declared "that habits of economy and temperance combined with industry and education are the great safeguard of free republican institutions, [and] the elevation of the condition of man...."[50]

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[47] James C. Sylvis, The Life of William H. Sylvis, p. 333.

[48] Ibid., p. 334.

Delegates to the convention not only condemned intemperance in principle, but also attacked specific abuses which involved Black workers. White planters and employers were criticized for giving freedmen a liquor ration, or encouraging them to run up large accounts at the company store. This pernicious practice was designed to "stupefy their brain and incapacitate them to know the condition of their accounts, the value of their labor, and to rob them of their sense and feelings of humanity...."[51] The NCLU's convention urged all Black workers to give up intoxicants "because it is the great cause of so much misery and poverty among the working classes", and requested the intensified efforts of all temperance organizations in the struggle to elevate the worker.

Black interest in the temperance movement began in 1840s with the upsurge of ante-bellum reform attachments.

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[49] Commons, et. al., Documentary History, Vol. IX, Pt. I, p. 248.

[50] Ibid., pp. 249-250.

[51] Ibid.

The Tenth Annual Conference of the Western District of the African Methodist Episcopal Churches passed a resolution which recommended that its ministers promote the cause of temperance and total abstinence.[52] Black church conventions in Michigan and Ohio endorsed temperance statements of a similar nature.[53] In 1882 a Black state convention meeting in Kansas memorialized Congress to prohibit the sale of all intoxicating liquors, and in 1904 the National Association of Colored Women endorsed the goals of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.[54]

The juncture of temperance reform and the elevation of the Black American was exemplified in the life of Frederick Douglass. In 1845 he sailed to England and Ireland, where he met with Father Theobald Mathew. Douglass delivered temperance addresses in Cork and Birmingham, and, with William Lloyd Garrison, he attended the World Temperance Convention meeting in London in 1846.[55] The attack on insobriety, like that on slavery, emphasized the liberation of the individual from a particular form of social oppression, in this case one that was self-imposed.

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[52] Herbert Aptheker, A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States (New York, 1951), p. 206.

[53] Ibid., pp. 234, 279.

[54] Ibid., pp. 685, 890.

[55] Philip S. Foner, The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, Vol. 1 (New York, 1950), p. 63.

Black leaders continued to view temperance reform as respectable lever for raising the status of Black workers through the nineteenth century and into the Progressive Era. In 1908 Booker T. Washington described the prohibition movement in the South as a necessary and "moral" movement. It was, he wrote, an "intellectual awakening and a moral revolution."[56] Prohibition was a response to the desire to end intemperance in the interests of both races and to limit the economic disadvantages engendered by drunkenness. While both Black and white reformers agreed on the ultimate benefits of sobriety, they seldom did so in unison. When Frederick Douglass took the temperance pledge administered by Father Mathew, the American Temperance Society excluded Black members.[57] In 1842 when the Negro Temperance Organization of Philadelphia paraded to attract new members their temperance hall was destroyed by a white mob and the parade dispersed. Agreement on the evils of intemperance failed to be translated into genuine cooperation between white and Black workers.[58]

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[56] Booker T. Washington, "Prohibition and the Negro," The Outlook, (March 14, 1908), p. 589.

[57] Foner, The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, Vol. I, p. 63.

[58] Ibid.

"Every little makes a muckle"

"All real prosperity in life, rests on frugality, on the right use of money, on the power to save in some way what we earn," the Rev. Dr. Coliver told the Trades Assembly of Chicago in 1866.[59] Coliver, an immigrant English Methodist, firmly assured the city's workers that frugality led to self-improvement, and that it in turn led to success. The Workingman's Advocate advised its readers that "Elbow grease is the only stuff to make gold with." The popular formula for success was clear and hardly limited to the work-culture of the middle class: working men were urged to labor hard, live frugally, and shun all intoxicating beverages. The newspaper reiterated the simple message of temperance and frugality in numerous temperance tales, poems, and short moral sermons.

The typical temperance tale extolled the virtue of sobriety by pointing to the direful consequences of intemperance. This involved a pattern of dramatic crisis, the moment of enlightenment as the intemperate hero saw his true uselessness to society and to himself, and the final denouncement of his evil habit. In the end he took the teetotal pledge and embarked upon a successful career in

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[59] WA, May 26, 1866.

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business. The temperance tale, as a particular type of melodramatic literature, functioned as a vehicle of popular morality or social criticism.[60] The social criticism was directed at the saloon-keeper, the social custom of "treating," or the harshness of life which forced a person to seek escape through intoxication. It was, nevertheless, an optimistic literature, for there was always the chance that one might save himself, that one might replace a bleak future with a happy life.

Eleven temperance tales selected from the Workingman's Advocate appealed directly to working men, and each emphasized the direful consequences of intemperance. The selected tales fell rather naturally into two groups. In the first group the stories dealt mostly with the theme of sobriety and upward mobility. In the second group the primary theme was the loss of economic independence and respectability which followed the drunkard's course of downward mobility. These tales elaborated the fate of those who did not work hard, save, or follow the rule of voluntary abstinence from intoxicants.

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[60] In his essay on melodrama as a form of popular culture in the nineteenth century David Grimsted writes: "The melodrama was bound by its audiences' faith in a universe ruled by moral laws as clear and encompasssing as those of Newton's solar system." In the temperance melodrama especially "evil became a matter of the weakness of the good as well as the machinations of the bad." David Grimsted, "Melodrama as Echo of the Historically Voiceless," Anonymous Americans: Explorations in Nineteenth-Century

One of the eleven temperance tales, "A Bunch of Rags," was the story of a young factory worker, Tom Hall, who had "fallen into the mocker's power."[61] As the tale unfolds, Tom, who came from a respectable family, took to drinking when a dram shop opened close to the foundary where he worked. At first he took only an occasional sip, but gradually he became a regular patron and went about in a continuous state of intoxication. He soon lost his job and the respect of his friends, and became the neighborhood idler dressed in rags. His insobriety reduced him from the status of self-sufficient worker to that of a ragged pauper, and the story chronicles his downward mobility. A bunch of rags, his sister commented, "would be the best sign-board a publican could hang across his door."

Suddenly, however, the young worker ceased going to the dram shop and his appearance began to change for the better. He became conscious of his poverty and state of dependence, and resolved to become a teetotaler. The owner of the dram shop realized that "the end of drink is misery and rags" and closed his doors. Later he entered a respectable trade where he made a handsome and honest fortune. Tom went back to work as a temperance man, applied himself, and became a famous engineer. Material

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Social History, ed. by Tamara K. Hareven (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1971), pp. 83-84.

[61] WA, June 6, 1868.

success was the almost immediate result of sobriety and honest hard work.

"A Story With a Moral" detailed the relationship between temperate behavior and upward mobility.[62] An older gentleman walking along the docks came upon a waif whom he took home and adopted as his son. He gave him a job in his business and, as the boy grew older, he agreed to set him up in business in the West if three conditions were observed: the boy must never swear, never drink rum, and never enter politics. The young man agreed, went West, and prospered. When he returned he visited his benefactor who immediately asked him, "Are you a temperance man?" The adopted son replied that he neither drank liquor nor gave it to his workers or guests. The story concluded with the following moral: "The young man was very attentive to business, and his habits of sobriety and industry were crowned with good fortune, which generally accompanies virtue, courage, enterprise and intelligence."[63]

Several of the tales and numerous temperance poems attacked the saloon and the saloon-keeper as special enemies of the working man. "The Rum-seller's Instructions to his Clerk " attacked the saloon owner and the widespread adulteration of spirits. In bad verse and good

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[62] WA, August 1, 1868.
[63] Ibid.

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intent, Augustus Dow described the saloon-keeper giving the following instructions to his helper:

> "I will whisper a secret you must not 'divulge'
> As my patrons would deem it good cause for a quarrel,
> My liquors so choice, in whose use they indluge,
> Are all drawn from the very same alcohol Barrel.
>
> . . . .
>
> "With pulverized bed-bugs to give it a bead,
> And poisonous drugs to impert the right flavor,
> If rightly decocted is all that we need,
> To insure beyond question our customers' favor."[64]

Dow added several factual footnotes to his poem to sustain his claims concerning the deliberate adulteration of popular intoxicating beverages, including beer and wine. "Proof," he added, "can be adduced, if required, that the ingredients here mentioned are used in the preparation of the accursed stuff...."[65]

The adulteration of spirits struck reformers as a good example of the disregard for the worker which liquor interests commonly shared with those who exploited the people through the adulteration of milk, meats, and other foods. American spirits were described, without foundation perhaps, as the "worst known in the world."[66] One of the selected temperance tales, "How Jennie Saved Her Husband," was severly critical of the social custom of "treating,"

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[64] WA, May 16, 1874.
[65] Ibid.
[66] WA, January 17, 1874.

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the practice of buying drinks for one's friends and acquaintances, which many reformers blamed for the close attachment of workers to the saloon.[67]

As a part of its temperance endeavors the Workingman's Advocate popularized alternatives to the saloon, or schemes to avoid its influences. In 1872 the newspaper took up the campaign for the Monday payment of wages. By paying wages on Monday rather than Saturday, the wild intemperance of Saturdays followed by a high rate of abstenteeism on "blue" Monday would decline. "That a sadly large share of the wages received by our working people on Saturday night practically finds its direct way to the gin mill, or some scarcely less hurtful form of dissipation, it is impossible to doubt," one commentator noted.[68] While certain features of Monday payments were attractive to labor-temperance reformers, the ultimate reponse was that the worker, not the payment of wages, must be changed. It was better to attack the causes rather than the symptoms, to "begin with the workman himself, not his wages."

The newspaper of the National Labor Union did urge its readers to stay home on Saturday nights and avoid frequenting the dram shop or gin mill. The "stay at home" idea also stressed the added virtue of thrift. "Save the dollar you are tempted to spend foolishly. Beautify your home rather than some gilded saloon," the Workingman's Advocate advised.[69] As an alternative to the saloon, workers were encouraged to take up some means of self-improvement, the "perusal of some scientific, historical or literary work" in their free evenings. An article reprinted from the Scientific American urged young mechanics to spend their leisure studying book-keeping, drawing, or other pursuits which might improve their chances for success.[70]

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[67] WA, June 16, 1866.
[68] WA, December 21, 1872.

The most popular alternative to the saloon in the years following the Civil War was the coffee-house movement. Properly conducted, coffee-houses offered the warmth, companionship, and relaxation associated with the saloon. Workers especially were benefited, for they could secure cheap and wholesome food and beverages without visiting the neighborhood tavern. The Workingman's Advocate noted the YMCA's successful coffee-house experiment, and in 1868 the newspaper recommended that it be tried in working-class sections of the larger industrial cities.

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[69] WA, September 26, 1868.

[70] WA, December 18, 1869. The worst temptations for the worker, it was noted, were "The drinking saloon, the gambling den, etc., which invite you to enter and with delusive excitements seek to blind your moral perceptions and lead you to ruin."

The Young Men's Christian Association opened a coffee room in Cincinnati in 1865.[71] By 1866 an estimated four hundred people, most of them workers, visited the establishment daily. Other coffee-rooms were opened in the center of the manufacturing district and specialized in serving food at prices cheaper than the neighboring saloons. A nickle bought a cup of soup and a complete dinner cost only twenty-five cents. Attached to the dining rooms were reading rooms where workers were encouraged to spend their spare time in self-improvement.[72]

The dearth of public drinking fountains in business and industrial districts forced workers to haunt the saloons for cool and refreshing beverages. In Chicago, the Workingman's Advocate complained in 1866, there were only a few public water fountains in the downtown district. Most men, the newspaper stated, "would consider it a special intrusion to go into a saloon where they kept other fluids for sale, and inquire for this beverage [water]."[73]

Florence Kelley, secretary of the National Consumers' League, recalled that when she was factory inspector of Illinois in the 1890s she visited factories where the workers had no water fountains. The custom was to dash across the street to the saloon after work, or to "rush the growler," a pail of fresh beer brought by a young child from the saloon to the factory, at frequent intervals.[74] Years later the Woman's Christian Temprance Union established a special program for erecting drinking fountains in downtown areas and public parks as alternatives to the saloon. Companies manufacturing fountains, such as the J.W. Fiske Company, offered special rates to the WCTU and other charitable groups which sponsored the erection of public water fountains.[75]

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[71] WA, November 14, 1866.
[72] WA, December 19, 1868.
[73] WA, July 14, 1866.

Young working-class girls were advised to seek only sober young mechanics as husbands. The *Workingman's Advocate* cautioned its female readers against marrying grog-shop vagrants.[76] "Depend upon it," one writer concluded, "you are better off alone than you would be were you tied to a man whose breath is polluted and whose vitals are being gnawed out by alcohol."[77] The ideal husband was the "callous-handed, intelligent and industrious mechanic."

The moral and practical emphasis on temperance was followed closely by a concomitant emphasis on frugality. Workers were urged to remain sober and save their surplus wages for necessities. A group of New England labor leaders declared in 1869 that working-class reform was "no trick of a few in the corner," but a statement of the primary wants of all mankind. The immigrant savings banks of Chicago advertized regularly in the Workingman's Advocate. Banks such as the Hibernian Banking Association Savings Bank and the German Savings Bank solicited business from the workers of the city. The Chicago Savings Institute invited workers to deposit surplus earnings rather than spend them foolishly: "Every clerk, mechanic, or workingman who visits the savings bank, instead of the saloon, on Saturday night, is soon sure to be on the road to true independence" its advertisement stated.[78] "Dimes soon make dollars, and a frugal man will have five hundred dollars, or may be more, in his savings bank for a rainy day."[79] As the thrifty Scotsman put it, "Every little makes a muckle."

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[74] Florence Kelley, "Laborers in Heat and Heavy Industries, *The Annals*, (September, 1923), pp. 175-177.

[75] *WA*, September 26, 1868.

[76] *WA*, November 20, 1869.

[77] *WA*, November 14, 1868.

Before the Depression of 1873, workers were urged to follow the simple axioms of success. It was great folly to be poor, "Uncle Ben" explained in the Workingman's Advocate. "Fortune is for those who by Diligence, Honesty, and Frugality, place themselves in a position to grasp hold of Fortune when it appears in view."[80] "A man's luck," the newspaper stated, "is generally the measure of his capacity and perservance."[81]

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[78] WA, April 22, 1871.

[79] WA, June 24, 1871.

The social values of sobriety and frugality were important in restoring the respectability which many journeymen workers felt they had lost by the middle of the century. James Tillson, in an address to the Blacksmiths and Machinists in 1870, pleaded with them to excel and to be temperate. Avoid the dram shop, he advised, "as you would a deadly poison, if you would maintain a self-respect, or the respect of mankind."[82] The depression years of 1873-78 gave such sentiments as these a momentary hollow ring. Attacks on the wage system, Greenbackism, the demand for regulation of the railroads, and criticism of the Government replaced the previous emphasis on the reformation of the worker's habits.

The elaboration of economic and social facets of the temperance movement between 1866 and 1873 gave this particular reform idea an appeal which it lacked in the 1840s. Temperance was successfully separated from its evangelical heritage and invigorated with a popular enthusiasm that cut across sectarian divisions and social class. The reformist inclinations of the NLU and the NCLU justified temperate behavior as an in important stage in the elevation of the poor and the struggle to re-establish the social respectability of the laboring man in American society. And, while the National Labor Union declined rapidly after 1873, the values of sobriety and frugality retained their appeal among conservative workers who belonged to the benevolent and protective associations. The emerging railroad brotherhoods in particular continued the efforts of William H. Sylvis and the NLU to establish a sober and thrifty reputation for the working man.

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[80] WA, July 6, 1872.
[81] WA, May 26, 1866.
[82] WA, July 9, 1870.

CHAPTER III

"OUR CORNER STONE IS TEMPERANCE"

The demise of the NLU did not mark a comparable decline in temperance interest on the part of American workers. Individual craft unions promoted the temperance ideal in union periodicals and at local meetings. On a national scale the Knights of Labor committed itself to a vigorous campaign to remove saloon-keepers and known inebriates from its membership. But the railroad brotherhoods in particular, especially the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, maintained a steadfast attachment to the principle of sobriety and popularized its acceptance during the decades of labor upheaval between 1870 and 1890.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was first organized in 1863 as the Brotherhood of the Footboard in Marshall, Michigan.[1] This attempt to establish a protective and benevolent organization for the enginemen failed, but five years later the Footmen reorganized as the BLE. From its inception the new brotherhood emphasized the principles of "moral uplift," including a heavy stress on

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[1] Reed C. Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer, 1863-1963: A Century of Railway Labor Relations and Work Rules* (Ann Arbor, 1963), *passim.*

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sobriety. Beset by a significant technological transition in the transportation industry, the engineers felt a great concern for the public image of their occupation. Most of the early engineers were machinists who followed the steam boilers onto wheel-based platforms. The changing technology of rail transportation demanded a reshaping of the engineer's self-image as well, for he was no longer a simple machinist responsible for his own safety. By the 1880s the engineer was expected to be a disciplined professional with a high degree of pride in his occupation.

The idea of an unsober and wild-eyed engineer driving his train headlong down a wobbly and poorly contructed iron track did little to inspire public confidence in the railroad. On this both the engineers and the companies agreed. Since most rail accidents were blamed on the engineer, the brotherhood was anxious to avoid public criticism by insuring that its members were sober and responsible workers. An intense regard for industrial safety and professional acceptance by both the companies and the general public led to the emphasis on sobriety by the BLE.

In keeping with these concerns, the engineers elected Charles Wilson as their first president. Wilson, a strong defender of the principle of sobriety, immediately set to work to elevate the "character" of the railroad engineer. As an engineer on the New York Central system, he developed a conservative approach to organizing engineers which the company tolerated with little opposition.[2] Wilson refused to approve the use of the strike to gain recognition of employee grievances, or to denounce the use of company blacklists, which led to his ouster as Grand Chief Engineer in 1874. Rather than confront rail officials directly with the workers' demands, he sought to cultivate a public opinion favorable to the members of the brotherhood which would lead the railroads to deal equitably with their employees. In a more positive sense, however, Wilson established an important accident and life insurance plan for the BLE and stressed the traditional values of the benevolent society.[3]

Reed Richardson, in his study of the engineers, described Wilson's policies as "appeasement toward employers."[4] Instead of appeasing the railroads, Wilson hoped to convince the companies that the engineers were absolutely indispensable to the efficient operation of a modern rail system. His essential policy might better be described as a policy of endearment, one of persuading the companies to recognize the worth and dignity of the worker.

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[2] Donald L. McMurry, The Great Burlington Strike of 1888: A Case History in Labor Relations (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), pp. 29-30.

[3] Lloyd G. Reynolds and Charles C. Killingsworth, Trade Union Publications: The Official Journals, Convention Proceedings, and Constitutions of International Unions and Federations, 1850-1941, I(Baltimore, 1944), pp. 56-57.

[4] Richardson, Locomotive Engineer, p. 124.

In order to gain the respect of the public and company officials, the BLE under Wilson defined a new code of proper conduct for the engineer. The reliable engineman must be sober and temperate in his habits, for nothing destroyed reliability as quickly as a reputation for drunkenness. "We try to manage our business," Wilson wrote, "so as to secure the confidence and esteem of our employers, and work entirely in harmony with them, insisting that our members must pursue a proper course of conduct."[5] The primary obligation for defining the new code of conduct rested with the brotherhood, but Wilson made it clear that the emphasis on stability and "character" must have the support of the companies if they were to be successful.

"The first question should be," wrote Charles Elliott Perkins of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad, "What is the Man? What is his character? What are his habits?"[6] Every engineer was expected to answer that he had only the highest character, and that his habits were those of a temperate man.[7] In 1868 Wilson warned the

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Quoted in Edward Chase Kirkland, Dream and Thought in the Business Community, 1860-1900, Quadrangle Books (Chicago, 1964), p. 71.

[7] Locomotive Engineers Monthly Journal, October, 1870, p. 484. Hereafter cited as: MJ.

BLE's annual convention that: "To ensure their [the general public's] respect and countenance we must guard well the honor and conduct of all our members."[8]

By popular reputation, the "character" of the engineers was greatly in need of reform by the 1860s. Early descriptions of the habits of the men of the footboard were seldom flattering. A description of the locomotive engineer would be incomplete without mentioning his lack of sobriety, Richardson's study suggests. A correspondent to the Monthly Journal of the BLE noted the rarity of temperance among the engineers: "They would congregate in grogshops and beer saloons to recount over the wonderful adventures on the road....They would drink to sooth their grievances and demonstrate mutual sympathy; drink evil and bad luck to some obnoxious and tyrannical official, and drink long life and continual prosperity to themselves."[9] Engine shops were often located in the country rather than in the towns to keep the shopmen free from what were considered to be the corrupting influences of the engineers.

Wherever they gathered, the engineers were viewed as hearty companions, always willing to treat their fellow workers to another round of drinks. The locomotive engineer was simply too "liberal" in his habits:

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[8] Minutes of the Grand International Division of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Chicago, 1868, p. 9.

[9] As quoted in Richardson, Locomotive Engineer, p. 106.

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> Who ever saw a party of locomotive engineers together, where one of the party indluged in stimulating drinks, that he did not urge all of his associates to participate with him. This practice is evidence of a whole-soulled and liberal feeling, but the result is often times diastrous to the good resolutions that some brothers have made.[10]

Wilson condemned the habit of treating as absolutely injurious to the individual and the brotherhood alike. As long as he led the brotherhood, Wilson conducted a personal campaign against the social custom of "treating," which he particularly blamed for occupational accidents and improvidence.

The determination to improve the public image of the BLE, based on a revolution in moral habits, was summed up in the new motto of the brotherhood: "Sobriety, Truth, Justice, and Morality." The emphasis on uplifting the members of the profession often eclipsed the more mundane considerations of purely economic issues. Speaking in regard to the sentiments of the BLE's motto in 1868 Wilson declared:

> ...I assert that our corner stone is temperance--it is the most beautiful ornament in the character of any man; in ours it is a necessity. We never can succeed nor make any advancement as a society without we are temperate, and the nearer

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[10] *Minutes*, BLE, 1868, p. 9.

> we come to total abstinence from all that can intoxicate the less expulsions we shall have, and the sooner we shall be recognized as men every way worthy of the responsible positions we occupy.[11]

The Grand Chief Engineer went so far as to identify public sympathy for the cause of the engineers with the brotherhood's receptivity to the ideal of temperance. Only by "good conduct and judicious management" could they advance their claim for a higher position in American society, both as men and as mechanics.

The Rev. Robert L. Collier of the Church of the Messiah in Chicago urged the engineers to abandon the idea that "leisure and life is in whiskey, blackened cards, and foul air." Good mechanics and artisans ought to be honest, sober workmen. Leisure provided the opportunity for self-improvement and moral advancement. With the observance of temperance, he added, "thoughtful, serious, sobermen" will devote their time to "pleasurable conversation and instructive reading."[12] Because the engineer carried the heavy responsibility for both life and property in the daily course of his job, "absolute sobriety" was mandatory in every phase of his profession. Of the engineer, Collier cautioned, "No dissipation or idleness must be his tempting devil when the life of a fellow mortal is at stake. Your industry is then moral, verily religious."[13]

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[11] Ibid., p. 10. Emphasis added.

[12] WA, October 31, 1868.

Sobriety had its immediate economic advantages, too, as advocates of temperate behavior were always willing to point out. Locomotive engineers with the reputation of sober and reliable workers expected to be employed more often and at higher wages than less dependable workers. Before seniority rules regulated the assignment of trips, and "first in, first out" became standard, sober engineers expected to receive preferential treatment in work assignments. The operation of the "Extra Board" also tended to favor workers of sober reputation by allotting them extra work when regular employees were not available. The periods of irregular employment in the late 1860s and 1870s made the competition for jobs even more keen, while the inclination of some companies to employ apprentices in the place of unpopular experienced workers added another factor of uncertainty. The intemperate engineman might well find himself at the bottom of the worklist when times were slack.[14]

"All admit the necessity," Wilson wrote, "of having strictly temperate men to run the engines used in transporting the immense traffic through the country; but I fear the importance of discarding the use of intoxicating drinks entirely, is not fully realized by all our members."[15] The refusal of some members to follow the strict temperance rule laid down by the BLE's leadership led Wilson to warn the delegates to the 1869 convention in Baltimore that there was no compromise on the temperance issue. "Total abstinence," he informed them, "from all that can intoxicate is the only safe and consistent ground for the Brotherhood."[16]

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Richardson, Locomotive Engineer, p. 113.

The constitution of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers contained several provisions which dealt directly with the problem of insobriety. The constitution of 1864 provided that occasional drunkenness be punished with censure, and that any member who acquired a reputation for habitual intoxication be expelled as quickly as possible.[17] In 1868 the penalty of expulsion was made mandatory "should any brother neglect his duty or injure the property of his employer, or endanger the lives of persons, willfully, while under the influence of liquor."[18]

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[15] Minutes, BLE, 1868, p. 8.

[16] Proceedings of the Grand International Division of the Brotherhood of the Locomotive Engineers, Baltimore, 1869, p. 14.

[17] Richardson, Locomotive Engineer, p. 131.

[18] Ibid.

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In 1870 the problem of intemperance led to a tightening of the procedures for disciplining members who acquired reputations for insobriety. Article V, Section 5, of the BLE's constitution established the steps to be taken in appropriate dismissal cases. A charge of drunkenness might be brought against any member of a sub-dividion of the brotherhood. If the charge was sustained upon investigation, the Chief Engineer of the sub-division appointed a committee of three to prepare a formal report, and the offending member might then be expelled by a majority vote of the members present. Immediately following the expulsion vote it was the obligation of the First Assistant Engineer to "inform the officers of the road upon which the offending brother is employed, of his expulsion and the cause thereof."[19]

Wilson urged the swift enforcement of expulsion hearings to remove all known intemperate members of the brotherhood. He estimated in 1870 that nine-tenths of all expulsions were for drunkenness.[20] "If our brothers will adopt the plan I have suggested," he wrote, "and immediately arraign every member that uses intoxicating liquors to excess, I think it will more effectively stop drunkenness than any other plan we adopt."[21]

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[19] MJ, May, 1870, p. 200.
[20] *Ibid*., p. 201.
[21] *Ibid*.

The expulsion list which the Monthly Journal carried on a regular basis suggests that the emphasis on sobriety was more than a noble ideal given momentary recognition. "Drunkenness" on the list was described as "that black, bitter, burning word." Engineers charged with saloon-keeping, excessive drinking, intoxication on the job, or the destruction of company property while under the influence of alcoholic beverages, might find themselves expelled and their names carried on the list. The publication of the list was designed to deter an expelled member from one subdivision being employed in another, and to inform the companies of the brotherhood's disciplinary action. An intemperate member was a liability to be avoided at all costs.

In February, 1867, Charles A. Norcross of Division No. 40 reported an expulsion for drunkenness. "I am sorry to be obliged to record," he wrote, "the expulsion of one of our members for intemperance(notice of which you have received), but am happy to be able to say through the influence of the Brotherhood many others have become almost, if not quite, total abstinence men."[22] In March, 1871, seven of the fourteen expulsions listed were for "Drunkenness".[23] In 1875 one W. E. Whitten was expelled "for keeping a saloon and gaming room," and a year later a John Blackstock was expelled "for non-payment of dues, keeping a saloon and unbecoming conduct."[24]

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[22] MJ, February, 1867, pp. 12-13. A month earlier Division No. 18 expelled four or five members for "drunkenness, and other conduct unbecoming a brother," MJ, January, 1867, p. 14.

[23] MJ, March, 1871, p. 134.

An examination of the expulsion list for 1880 indicates that intemperance was still prevalent enough to be considered grounds for censure and ostracism by the BLE. Disciplinary action, in the form of suspension or expulsion, was taken against 219 members. Twenty-three of the cases dealt with violations of the prohibition against intoxication, or the keeping of saloons. Those expelled exceeded those suspended by more than two-to-one.[25] These figures do not give the complete picture, for it is impossible to know how many of those expelled for failure to pay their dues were impoverished my spending too much on intoxicants. T. D. Voorhees, of Division No. 30, urged the other divisions of the brotherhood to: "Be vigilant in looking up all cases of drunkenness, especially those while on duty, punish them and notify the officers of the road before they have acted upon it, if you can."[26]

As early as 1868 J. L. Ramsey of Rock Island, Illinois, introduced a resolution calling for the automatic expulsion of any engineer who left his job to open a saloon or become a saloon-keeper.[27] The Locomotive Engineers took pride in the fact that they were the first union to exclude automatically saloon-keepers from membership, a policy later identified with the Knights of Labor. Leadership from the top, combined with anti-saloon sentiments and temperance enthusiasm from members in the BLE's subdivisions, proved relentless in its determination to drive the saloon element from the brotherhood. The expulsion list of 1880 reveals that three members were expelled for quitting their occupations as engineers "for the purpose of keeping a drinking saloon."[28]

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[24] MJ, March, 1875, p. 153; September, 1876, p. 419.

[25] MJ, February-December, 1880, passim.

[26] MJ, February, 1867, p.13.

The ejection of liquor-sellers from the BLE after 1870 was justified on the assumption that former engineers who became saloon owners would use their friendship with members to establish a steady clientele, thereby enriching themselves and impoverishing their fellows. Saloon operators were often looked upon as nefarious hangers-on in society, and it was feared that association with them would lower the status of the engineer in the public's estimation. As the Monthly Journal noted: "If we would elevate our calling and ourselves on the social scale we must be noted for our sobriety and general good deportment."[29] Wilson also believed than an enforced separation of members and saloons was the only way to achieve complete sobriety. Unless the engineers could stop the use of "so much whisky," he wrote, "we might as well stop the Brotherhood."[30]

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[27] Minutes, BLE, 1868, p. 16.
[28] MJ, 1880, passim.
[29] MJ, April, 1870, p. 164.

In dealing with intemperate members the BLE deliberately chose to cooperate with the companies. In effect the brotherhood maintained its own blacklist with the consent and approval of the railway managers and officials. This policy was more prudent than vindictive, at least in the eyes of the brotherhood's leaders. Those convicted of intemperate behavior, Wilson insisted, must be reported to the company at once "then you will have gained the sympathy and encouragement of all officials that are worthy of any respect."[31]

The cooperation of brotherhood and corporation to combat insobriety at the national level was reinforced by similar efforts at the divisional level of the BLE. Delos Everett of Division No. 45, West Philadelpia, reported in 1867 that he had organized a local society of the Sons of Temperance, called "Railroad division," composed entirely of railroad workers.[32] The motive for organizing the temperance society, he wrote, was "to gain for ourselves a reputation for honesty, sobriety and industry." In states where prohibitionist or teetotal activities were prevalent engineers were receptive and sincere supporters.

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[30] MJ, May, 1870, p. 201.

[31] Ibid.

[32] MJ, February, 1867, p. 11.

In 1867 the local division of the BLE in Portland, Maine, passed a rule which required all new members of the local to take a temperance pledge before being accorded the rights of full membership. Each prospective member knelt, with his left hand on the Bible, and repeated the following words:

> I........ do hereby and hereon solemnly promise and swear, that I will abstain from the use of all intoxicating drinks (except as medicine) while I remain a member of this, or any other division, of the institution known as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and will use all my influence to induce other brothers to do the same....[33]

The vow was sealed by kissing the Scripture, in true fraternal fashion, as a sign of sincere dedication to the ideals of temperance and the brotherhood.

F. G. A. E. Fellows and H. C. Hays, who edited the Monthly Journal successively from 1869 to 1894, devoted extensive coverage to the relationship between temperance and professional dignity.[34] The journal, adhering to the popular tastes of its readers, published temperance tales and poetry, and even a few temperance songs.[35] Mr. E. H. Mitchell of Michigan City, Indiana, wrote to the editor expressing his appreciation for the strong stand taken in favor of temperance: "I am glad to see that you are laying a burning hand upon the evil of intemperance. Do not, I beg you, cease to agitate the matter through the Journal. I fear the evil is on the increase in many places...."[36] The editors reprinted numerous letters from members of the brotherhood endorsing the BLE's rigid rule on sobriety, or attacking the "saloon interests" in American politics. The saloon, one writer complained, was a "trafficker in ruined homes, broken hearts and human blood,"[37]

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[33] MJ, August, 1867, pp. 15-16. Wilson urged the other divisions to follow the example of the Maine pledge before admitting new members.

[34] Reynolds and Killingsworth, Trade Union Publications, Vol. I, pp. 53-58.

While denunciations of the saloon were common, letters to the journal became more militant in their attacks on the institution. A letter to the journal in 1884 charged that the saloon-keeper did more harm to his fellow men "than all the other organs of the evil one combined."[38] The intrusion of the saloon in American politics invited particularly heated criticism:

> Rum permeates the whole fabric from the outset, and the whole government is run in the interest of rum, and as a result we have laws which are

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[35] MJ, July, 1883, p. 355; see Appendix II, p. 329.
[36] MJ, April, 1871, p. 171.
[37] MJ, May, 1884, p. 281.
[38] Ibid.

> not enforced, nor indeed can be because of the subserviency of all branches of government to the rum power.[39]

Let the engineers, the correspondent added, refrain from supporting any political party which "dictates submission to rum," whether it be the Democratic or the Republican party.

The emergence of prohibition forces in the 1870s received the support of several engineers who felt that voluntary total abstinence would not work. One member of the BLE wrote in 1873 to congratulate those who demanded the suppression of the liquor traffic. "Prohibitionists," he wrote, "are daily increasing in strength, activity and influence, and will soon be a power in the land. Their position is no doubtful one. They are rallying under a flag that represents advanced ideas."[40]

From the 1860s through the Progressive decades the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers represented the strong temperance wing of organized labor. Warren Stone, who was elected Grand Chief Engineer in 1904, was one of the most vigorous temperance spokesmen in the history of the brotherhood. The other great railroad brotherhoods followed the example of the BLE and enforced their own strict codes of sober behavior in order to uplift the "character" of their memberships and win the respect of society for their profession.

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[39] Ibid.

[40] MJ, December, 1873, p. 583.

The Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen

The BRT was organized in Oneonta, New York, in 1883 as a protective society for railway brakemen.[41] Eugene V. Debs, as a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, helped to establish the first lodge of the brakemen, and Lodge No. 1 in Oneonta was named the Eugene V. Debs Lodge in his honor.[42] Its motto, similar to that of the BLE, was "Benevolence, Sobriety and Industry."

In 1886 the BRT described itself as "simply a social organization" seeking "to elevate the social and moral status of the brakemen as a class."[43] Death and sickness benefits, disability insurance, and financial aid to allay funeral expenses were the primary fraternal benefits offered to its membership. The brotherhood officially renounced the use of the strike and showed little interest in the doctrines of trade unionism early in its history. The journal of the BRT noted in 1886 that the brotherhood "has never been regarded as in any way opposed to the companies and has never taken part in any strike, nor is it part of their creed to participate in any such transactions."[44]

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[41] Railroad Trainmen's Journal, March, 1886, p. 30. Published earlier as the Railroad Brakemen's Journal. Hereafter cited as: RTJ.

[42] Ray Ginger, The Bending Cross: A Biography of Eugene Victor Debs (New Brunswick, N. J., 1949), pp. 38-39.

[43] RTJ, March, 1886, p. 30.

In harmony with its stated social and benevolent principles, the brotherhood followed the policy of discouraging intemperance established by the engineers. The work-values of sobriety and industriousness were stressed in order to endear the brakemen to the railroad managers in the same way these values were advanced by the other associations of railway workers. The BRT expelled those members who brought reproach on the brotherhood by their intemperate behavior in public, those who inbibed while on the job, or those who engaged in the selling of liquors. Article 22 of their constitution prescribed the penalties for intemperance:

> A member dealing in, or in any way connected with the sale of intoxicating liquors, shall, unless he withdraws, be expelled. Any member found guilty of drunkenness shall be suspended for the first offence. A repetition shall be punished by expulsion, and under no circumstances shall a member so expelled be reinstated before the lapse of six months.[45]

The expulsion list published in the brotherhood's journal listed eighty-four expulsions in March, 1886, two of which were for dunkenness and one for saloon-keeping. In June,

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[44] *Ibid.*

[45] *Ibid.*

1887, six suspensions were noted and five of them were for insobriety.[46]

In reviewing the important events of 1887 the Railroad Trainmen's Journal noted the important contribution the brotherhood had made in the struggle to establish the principle of abstinence among its members:

> The Brotherhood of Railroad Brakemen has done more, during its brief existence, to wipe out the evil of intemperance among brakemen than all the so-called temperance societies combined. Sobriety is a cardinal principle in the Brotherhood and intemperance is not tolerated.[47]

The Grand Master of the BRT, in his annual message of the same year, declared: "We want the public to understand that we give to the service nothing but sober, reliable men."[48]

Letters written to the journal of the BRT supported the strictures against intemperance in varying degrees of fervor. In 1891 one brakeman praised the success of prohibition in Kansas as a welcomed blessing which other states ought to duplicate with swiftness. "Since the year 1880," he wrote, "we have built more churches, more school houses, and better school houses than any state in the Union."[49] "Thank God," he continued, "there are no front door saloons in Kansas." Another brakeman complained that intemperance was primarily responsible for the weakness of working-class organizations, particularly unions. Workers who drank heavily seldom supported their brotherhoods and were therefore easily exploited by the corporations. Intemperance perpetuated wage slavery: "as soon as a man has spent all his money for drink he becomes a slave to the corporation"[50] Frank Jersey of Davenport, Iowa, despised the saloon and advised all workers to shun it. "The liquor traffic stands alone," he wrote, "and has no right to rank with the ordinary avocations of man."[51]

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[46] RTJ, March, 1886; June, 1887.
[47] RTJ, June, 1887, p. 246.
[48] RTJ, November, 1887, p. 246.
[49] RTJ, December, 1891, p. 890.

The Railroad Trainmen's Journal published articles on temperance contributed by its own members and noteworthy articles on the same topic published in other periodicals. "Temperance in Railroading," orginally published by the Railroad Service Gazette, called attention to the emphasis on sobriety by the companies and urged the rail unions to support their efforts on the issue. The requirement of sober workers only "at all times becomes the right and duty of the employer," the article stated.[52] The employers had the right to inquire into the private lives of their employees to ascertain if they "may safely and intelligently" carry out their duties. The concern of the BRT, of course, was that company rules on sobriety be enforced equally and without personal malice. But the major concern of all the rail brotherhoods was that they be permitted to act first in removing intemperate workers; that they be allowed to set their own house in sober order before it became necessary for the railroad managers to do so. Hostile critics who might have argued that such disciplinary action violated the personal liberty of the individual worker remained virtually silent.

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[50] RTJ, July, 1900, p. 595.
[51] RTJ, June, 1887, p. 264.
[52] RTJ, August, 1887, p. 353.

The "White Button" Movement

The temperance enthusiasm generated by the rail brotherhoods culminated in the organization of the Railroad Temperance Association. Membership in the RRTA was symbolized by wearing the "white button," an appropriate countersign to the white ribbon of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

The "white button" movement was founded by Lorenzo S. Coffin of Iowa.[53] He was born in New Hampshire about 1820 and taught school as a young man. Later, he followed other New Englanders westward and settled for a time in Oberlin, Ohio. The town was not only a center of abolitionism, but it was a strong temperance community as well. Coffin became an abolitionist and worked with the underground railroad in Ohio before the coming of the war. He

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[53] *RTJ*, September, 1887, *passim*.

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was a part-time farmer, with rather varied interests, and when the Civil War began he entered the Union Army as a chaplain. When the war ended he moved again, to Fort Dodge, Iowa, where as still a farmer he developed a strong interest in western railroad expansion.

Coffin was an active contributor to the railroad brotherhood journals and served as a member of the Iowa Railway Commission. As a commission member he actively promoted railroad safety measures and equipment, and even perfected a new safety car-coupling device. Above all else, however, he was the staunch champion of the temperance ideal for all railroad workers.

As early as 1888 Coffin began sending letters and articles to the journal of the BRT on the benefits of sobriety. In a letter to the journal he attacked the habit of "treating" prevalent among all working men. Quoting a temperance statement by Chauncey M. Depew of the New York Central system, he told the brakemen: "The two main elements of success in the world of anti-poverty are sobriety and industry."[54] For reasons of safety and individual prosperity it was absolutely necessary that all workers pursue temperate habits.

In 1892 he officially launched the "white button" movement. In May Coffin attended the convention of the Locomotive Engineers in Atlanta where he announced the

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[54] RTJ, January, 1888, passim.

the creation of the RRTA. The purpose of the movement, he explained to the engineers, was:

> ...the bringing in of a day when every man in train service in this land will be in heart and practice a total abstainer from all intoxicants that would in any way interfere with his being at all times capable of being at his best and able to do his whole duty in every emergency.[55]

The temperance association grew out of "a general feeling" for the necessity of total abstinence among railroad working men while on and off duty. Before the convention ended Coffin had exhausted his supply of white buttons, and within several months five or six thousand engineers reportedly belonged to the RRTA.[56]

Coffin spent the last months of 1892 travelling through Georgia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and other states visiting rail workers to promote the "white button" crusade. He reported in the BRT's journal that when temperance meetings were held the new movement was "enthusiastically" received and there was everywhere a great demand for the white buttons, the symbol of sobriety.[57] The Grand Lodge office of the BRT was selected as the headquarters of the RRTA. Of the white buttons Coffin wrote: "We earnestly hope that they may become a very common sight and have as many wearers as any organization of its kind in the world."[58]

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[55] MJ, November, 1892, pp. 1011-1012.

[56] Ibid.

[57] RTJ, July, 1892, p. 475.

In 1893 he continued to visit rail workers and their brotherhoods urging them to support the movement and shun the saloon. The white button announces to the world, he wrote, that the worker who wears it has said to himself:

> I believe more in saving my nickles and dimes to go to making me a home for my loved ones than I do in giving my hard earned wages to a saloon man that his wife and daughters may dress in silks and live in luxury at my expense.[59].

No real brother, Coffin wrote, "will ask one of these brothers to take a drink with him."[60] The "white button" movement continued into 1897 when it began to blend into the general attacks on the saloon and the liquor traffic advanced by the Progressives. Warren Stone of the BLE resumed the successful efforts of Coffin after 1904 when he became the spokesman for railroad temperance interests.

Between 1867 and 1897 the demand for temperate behavior and a new code of conduct for railway workers received strong support from the railroad brotherhoods. "Let the watchwords be temperance, prudence and justice,

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[58] Ibid., p. 476.
[59] RTJ, June, 1892, p. 434.
[60] MJ, June, 1893, pp. 521-522.

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and all will go well," an engineer wrote optimistically in 1867. The insistence on sobriety promised not only a revolution in the "character" of the worker, but also social and economic advancement. The appeal of temperance was not limited to narrow moral concerns alone, for as one engineer noted it was also a question of self-interest:

> Brethren, we are not called upon to be sober, temperate men in a moral point of view alone; we are pressed to it by every consideration of self interest and the interest of our class; we can make money by it, and enable ourselves to extend charity to all deserving objects. We can always be clear of the books in the brotherhood; have something laid by for a rainy day, and more than all, bring happiness and comfort to our families, and respect and consideration from our fellow-men.[61]

Sobriety meant the enhancement of social status, increased public respect, and upward mobility. The saloon, however, stood directly opposed to the realization of those social processes. The saloon was the poor man's club, but it was also the great allurement which robbed the worker and his family of their daily bread.

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[61] MJ, April, 1870, p. 165.

CHAPTER IV

"THE POOR MAN'S PARLOR"

The extent of working-class insobriety in the nineteenth century was magnified by the importance of the saloon in the social and cultural life of the worker. English, Irish, and Scottish workers immigrating to the United States brought with them a strong attachment to the public house and older drinking patterns which were an important aspect of the remaining guild system. Trade clubs, the older guilds, and emerging unions retained many of the customs and amercements which characterized the social life of the early craft workers. Temperance reformers in Great Britain severely criticized the hold of the public house on both the work and recreational activities of the British artisan, and in the last half of the century American temperance advocates expended thousands of hours and hundreds of pages on the hope that the saloon's attraction to the worker might be broken and the laborer freed from his impoverishing habits.

The British Pattern

Under the old guild regulations British and Irish workers were free to exact the customs of the craft in the form of "usage money," an amercement which was used to buy intoxicants for the workers in the shop. "Usage money" was levied on both social and craft pretexts, such as "entry" fees from apprentices accepted by the craft, or the birth of a child to a journeyman. In addition to entry fees, or "footings" as they were called in Ireland, the crafts exacted "usage money" at the end of an apprenticeship (called a "garnish"), fines for failure to appear on Monday morning with a clean shirt and a shaven face, fines for infractions in work duties, "brotherings" (the hazing of apprentices), journeyman entry fees, "joist money," and the settling of accounts.[1]

Apprentices and journeymen were subject to numerous fines in the form of "usage money" for violating the craft rules of the workshop. Amercements were levied for working under the accepted wage rate, working later than normal hours, over-producing to the detriment of other artisans or operatives, or if the worker "tells his employer what materials he uses in the week, or gives a return of what he has done during the week; if he is warned to leave his employer and does not...."[2] The fines were collected and spent to "treat" the workers either on the job or in a more extended fashion after the work day was over. This led to prolonged bouts of drunkenness and a high rate of absenteeism. Among the English sawyers, the Scottish reformer John Dunlop wrote, intemperance erupted into long bouts of drunkenness which lasted for days: "They often absent themselves from work for several days, while drinking, and when they do come to work their alternations of tippling during their period of employment are frequent: working and drinking time about from 4 a.m. till 10 p.m."[3] Young apprentices were often sent to the nearest public house for a pail of beer or porter with which the workers refreshed themselves until quitting time. Masters employing workmen were expected to pay for over-time work in liquid currency, and to "treat" their workers on numerous other occasions.

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[1] John Dunlop, The Philosophy of Artificial and Compulsory Drinking Usage in Great Britain and Ireland (London, 1839), pp. 40-42.

[2] Ibid., p. 121. The work duties which carried the

Recusants, those who refused to pay treating or "usage" fines, were ostricized and harassed by their fellow workers. Slippers were nailed to the floor, sleeves sewed together, hats punctured, tools stolen and hidden in the

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privilege of amercement were extensive: "If one leaves the shop, his station at a particular bench is rouped, i.e., auctioned by the men who remain and the price spent in drink: sometimes six shillings are thus obtained. When furniture is carried to a customer's house, at moving, packing, etc., the employer generally bestows a glass or two. When winter commences, and candles begin to be used, masters give their operatives a treat of spirits; and whenever the smallest sum is raised by a fine, the men greedily add to it, and thus a nucleus is easily formed, and drinking perpetuated." Pp. 6-7.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192.

nearby dung heap, and joints greased so that they would not glue together. Sometimes the tools or clothes of the reluctant artisan were taken and pawned to pay the entry fee or fines destined for the treating purse. Workers who would not pay, or perhaps could not pay, were "sent to Coventry," or punished in a more visible fashion as Dunlop noted:

> Another printer informed me that he had seen preparations of gun power, with burning matches attached to them suspended by a cord on the button of a fellow-workman's coat, because he would not give money for drink when a usage of the shop required him to do so, and that the powder soon after exploded, and burnt his clothes.[4]

The teetotal printer might find ink poured down his sleeves, and the unwilling carpenter was set upon and beaten on the soles of his feet with the flat of the saw until he changed his mind.

The resolute drinking habits of English and Irish workers fostered a great attachment to the public house. "Usage money" was lavished on treats and "muggings" at the tavern, and when workers were unable to pay they were permitted to stand "tick and trust" for their spirit accounts until payday. The economic entanglement of working man and tavern was even more severe because of the wage-paying practices of many masters and shop owners.

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

It was a common practice to pay operatives and artisans on Saturday night in large pound notes which encouraged them to seek the nearest public house where they might change the notes and divide the wages individually and settle their accounts with the tavern-keeper. This practice was a natural inducement to drunkenness:

> Many masters pay regularly in a public-house; and many, to save the trouble of procuring change, give pound notes among a number of their men, who adjourn statedly to the tavern, in order to change them and divided the wages. The public-houses are provided accordinly on Saturday nights with change and drink; and the ordinary rule is sixpence to be drunk for each pound changed. Sometimes, besides the sixpence, a greater part of the wages is drunk. Wives scold or weep, and spend cold wet nights in searching up and down desolate streets for their husbands, sometimes accompanied by several crying, half-sleeping little children, who, under such treatment, starve and sicken; the police-office is filled, and Monday's catalogue quadrupled above the other days of the week. This source of evil is truly deplorable.[5]

From the injudicious connection between the master and the publican there developed an encompassing pattern of dependence and misery for the worker.

To make matters worse trade clubs and unions took advantage of the meeting rooms available in the tavern to hold meetings and to maintain records pertinent to the affairs of the craft. The "house of call" for tramping

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[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

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artisans was the public house where members of the craft gathered to spend their "usage money".[6] It was quite common in numerous crafts and trades for foremen to operate public houses where they compelled shop workers to spend their money on pay nights. "Master riggers," observed Dunlop, "are many of them publicans, and exert a most mournful and dangerous drinking tyranny over the men."[7] Unemployed workers were often forced to treat foremen to "muggings", or free drinks, as bribes for consideration in filling vacant benches in the workshop. The long-standing animosity against the saloon-keeper on the part of the railroad brotherhoods and the Knights of Labor, among others, is more easily understood when the history of the publican's tyranny of the worker is placed in correct perspective.

The American Saloon

Few institutions were so closely identified with the American working man in the Gilded Age as the urban saloon.

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[6] See "The Tramping Artisan," in Hobsbawm, Labouring Men, pp. 41-65.

[7] Dunlop, Drinking Usage, p. 209. In Ireland: "Some masters or foremen keep a public-house, where they excite the men to take drink upon credit (tick), and stop it off the week's wages: this is said to be 'bringing sucken to their own mill.' There is a union in this trade [the carpenters]; the men meet at a public-house rent free, because the drink taken pays the room. This will at once be seen to be a fertile source of drunkenness." P. 113.

Journalists, social reformers, and urban romantics defended the saloon as the "poor man's club." Hostile critics of the saloon attacked it as the leading source of municipal corruption, the lynchpin of the political machine, an abscess of disease and filth, and the economic oppressor of the working man and immigrant. Early twentieth-century social workers and sociologists saw in the urban saloon the conviviality, social exchange, and recreational facilities which a progressive industrial society ought to provide for its working-class citizens. For the working man the institutional saloon was both friend and enemy. The saloon offered many services which the worker and immigrant found necessary for urban existence, but the saloon exacted its price, both in hard earned wages and in dissipation.

The laborer found in the saloon a social club, a community center, and a sympathetic institutional friend. The neighborhood tavern was a haven for the tired, the unrewarded, and the unemployed. The saloon served as union hall, hiring hall, bank, and the school where the newly-arrived learned their first lessons in American politics. The warmth, elaborate fixtures, and friendship of the corner saloon contrasted sharply with the dirty and confined tenement and hovel. The saloon for the working man was his parlor, the place where he entertained his friends in an atmosphere of hospitality.

While the worker often found the saloon a place of momentary escape from a hostile environment, he became increasingly concerned about the price he paid for his relaxation and leisure, about the quality and purity of the drink and food he purchased there, and about the influence of the saloon-keeper in his political life. Labor-temperance agitators pointed to the long history of exploitation of the public house and tavern, and urged the immediate reformation, if not outright abolition, of the saloon. The saloon, as other business enterprises, existed to make a profit, and the neighborhood tavern drew its profits from the brown pay envelopes of the worker.

The phrase "poor man's club" obscured a multitude of sins. Generally it was used to describe the urban saloon of the working-class and immigrant neighborhoods. But it was almost impossible to speak of "the" saloon, for a local drinking establishment reflected the nature of its clientele and neighborhood. Saloons ranged from the gin mill and blind tiger to the gilded saloon of up-town or the Tenderloin. The family institution of the German beer garden was lumped with the saloon inhabited by thieves, prostitutes, and shipping masters. The saloon was as diverse as the population of the city.

Robert A. Stevenson attempted to classify the various types of saloons in an essay published by Scribner's Monthly in 1901. There were, he wrote, four distinct types of saloons in America: the sailor's hangout, the typical "American" saloon, the immigrant saloon, and the political saloon.[8] The political saloon he instinctively identified as the Irish saloon.

The sailor's hangout, or waterfront saloon, dotted the ports and coastal areas of the major American maritime cities. From New York to New Orleans to San Francisco and Seattle the waterfront saloon exhibited a consistent reputation for sordid and undisciplined behavior. "At first glance," Stevenson wrote, "they appear to be the sordid, rather dirty resorts for hard drinking and nothing else."[9] The waterfront districts were populated with sailors' boarding houses, drinking establishments, and cheap cafes. The clientele of the waterfront tavern was naturally transient and volatile. Sailors coming ashore from weeks or months aboard ship were ready to seek comfort and relaxation as quickly and cheaply as the law allowed.

In 1868 and 1869 the New York Times explored the depressing world of the boarding-house system and the sailors' saloon. In New York City, as in most other portal cities, the sailor was exploited by the corrupt alliance of boarding-house operators and shipping masters who connived to relieve the sailor of his wages on shore in what quickly became a fixed cycle of indebtedness. "Runners" were sent to greet arriving ships and solicit customers for the boarding houses. Under existing law the captain had the right to withhold wages for ten days after the cargo was unloaded, so that many sailors had to live on credit until wages were paid. Merchant seamen were forced to sign over a part, or all, of their wages to the boarding-house proprietor. The proprietor, called a "land shark" by the seamen, then claimed the sailor's debt from the captain, who no doubt took his share in the process.

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[8] Robert A. Stevenson, "Saloons," Scribner's Monthly, 1901, pp. 571-579. The Rev. Raymond Calkins of the Committee of Fifty, a group of prominent social and religious leaders selected to study the extent of the saloon's influence and the scope of intemperance, derived a slightly different classification of the saloon. His scheme noted the existence of the "poor kinds of Irish saloons," "stand up saloons," the "continental type," and several others. Raymond Calkins, Substitutes For The Saloon (Boston, 1901), pp. 6-25.

[9] Stevenson, "Saloons," p. 571.

The boarding houses maintained bar-rooms or saloons where seamen were encouraged to run-up spirit accounts. In describing the boarding houses in 1869 the New York Times noted that the bar was "at once the protection and the profit of the land-lord; it is through the potent influence of its adulterated liquors that the sailor is deluted and robbed, and the women kept in subjection and under discipline...."[10] Prostitutes, excessive charges, and political corruption maintained the profitability of the sailor's saloon.

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[10] New York Times, November 29, 1868; March 2, 1869.

Herbert Asbury, in describing the days of the "Barbary Coast" of San Francisco, reported that in 1890 the city issued licenses to 3,117 drinking estalishments, or one license for every ninety-six people.[11] Aside from the regulated establishments, he estimated there were at least 2,000 unlicensed drinking places, called "blind tigers". The San Francisco waterfront was dominated by warehouses, boarding houses, and saloons haunted by shanghaiers; it was an area of the city virtually impossible to police. The sailor's saloon was an important factor in the operation of the urban political machine, for the boarding-house keeper could provide needed votes on election day by keeping the seamen in port until the polls closed by attaching their wages.[12]

Stevenson defined the typical "American" saloon as an establishment where people gathered for lunch and drinks and where "the subject discussed is millions, and the drink is whiskey or cocktails drunk standing."[13] The gilded saloon of the Tenderloin, or uptown district, catered to a thriving night life from the 1870s to the Prohibition era. Dancing, dining, "female attaches," and gaudy furnishings characterized the upper-class saloon of of the 1890s. Tom Gould's, Harry Hill's, Billy McGlory's, and the Black-and-Tan were only a few of the more notorious saloons of New York.[14] Such social establishments were havens of "debauchery and licentiousness," where prostitution was open, pick pockets common, and customers paid dearly for a frivalous evening. The gilded saloon of the Tenerloin had little in common with the neighborhood tavern of the working man.

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[11] Herbert Asbury, The Barbary Coast (New York, 1933), pp. 50-51.

[12] New York Times, March, 2, 1869.

[13] Stevenson, "Saloons," p. 572.

The immigrant saloon was the tavern of street-corner and neighborhood, of the industrial worker and the recent arrival. It was the saloon of Upton Sinclair's The Jungle and Chicago's Packingtown. The saloon was more than a place to eat and drink, a place to meet, for it was also the community center of the neighborhood. It was in the saloon, with its rear room designated "Union Headquarters," that the wedding reception of Jurgis Rudkis and his bride was held. The saloon-keeper was businessman and banker; for "where in Packingtown could a man go to have his check cashed but to a saloon, where he could pay for the favor by spending a part of his money?"[15] The slaughter-house workers could eat their dinner amid the stench and filth of the rendering works, or escape to the more hospitable saloons of "Whiskey Row" along Ashland Avenue. There the worker found warmth and a hot lunch, and something to drink, in surroundings far more pleasant than the heart of the stockyards.

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[14] Charles N. Glaab, ed., The American City: A Documentary History (Homewood, Ill., 1963), pp. 289-298.

[15] Upton Sinclair, The Jungle, Signet Classics, (New York, 1963), p. 85.

The immigrant saloon, as defined by Stevenson, was virtually indistinguishable from the working-class tavern in the poorer sections of the city. Both immigrant and worker were "marginal men" in the Gilded Age. "At the saloon, too," wrote Sinclair, "he felt at home. Part of the saloon-keeper's business was to offer a home and refreshments to beggars in exchange for the proceeds of their foragings; and was there anyone else in the whole city who would do this...?"[16] But with the saloon-keeper one hand continuously washed the other, for what he gave he also took back. He defrauded his customers by selling adulterated liquors and short measures, and by over-charging whenever he could: "By him you were sure to be cheated unmercifully, and that even though you thought yourself the dearest of the hundreds of friends he had."[17]

Most working-class saloons were not nearly as comfortable as those described by Sinclair in The Jungle. Often they were only a dingy room down a trash-strewed alley and up the back stairs:

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[16] Ibid., p. 227.
[17] Ibid., p. 21.

> He goes to a dreary house in a dreary alley, perhaps up a rickety 'three pair back' stairs, where neither brilliant light nor glowing back warmer, nor well-dressed wife, nor carpet, nor picture, nor books, nor music allure. The barroom is his parlor, his sitting-room, his library, his retreat in summer and in winter, his club-room, his political headquarters, his church, and pulpit. It is about the only place open to him, the only spot where he gets what little he knows of politics, religion, and the fine arts. His music is the ribald song of fellow drunkards, his art lewd pictures cut from police gazettes and stuck upon the walls, his statuary the rough-cast, painted image of an Italian peddlar, his articles of virtue the array of decanter and bottle along the showy shelf. Here, in noisy carousal, the 'treat' goes round, the poor vanity of the free-hearted meets its reward, the mean man is scorned, mad revelry speeds apace....[18]

Regardless of the sparse and dirty ambience of such saloons as this, the working man was often glad of the relief it provided from both his work and his own impoverished lodgings.

The German bierstube and biergarten, by contrast, were held to be the models of the respectable immigrant drinking establishment. Milwaukee was known for its famous beer gardens, most of them supported by the great German brewers of the city. The two most popular gardens were those maintained by the Pabst and Schlitz breweries.[19]

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[18] MBSL, 1871, pp. 540-541.

[19] Bayard Still, Milwaukee: The History of A City (Madison, 1948), p. 79.

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In 1879 the Schlitz Brewing Company expanded its park to include a menagerie, fountains, a summer opera, and the Pabst Park maintained a German-language theatre.[20] The Schlitz Palm Garden "was nightly the haunt of 'Society' and Sunday afternoons of family groups come to listen to Arthur Pryor's or Bohemian Kryl's bands."[21] At smaller beer gardens such as Ludwig's, opened in 1844, "the German citizenry danced at night, listened to open-air concerts, and bought cakes, coffee, and beer. . . ."[22]

In the larger urban and metropolitan centers one discovered the Polish saloon, the Russian cafe, and the Italian restaurant. In those with a more continental atmosphere chess, poetry readings, and drama replaced the bar and brass-rail of the working-class saloon.[23]

The "political saloon" was the local center of urban politics, the place where favors were asked and granted, jobs distributed, and even votes counted. It was the home of the conventional Irish politician popularized in

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[20] *Ibid.*, p. 404.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 402.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 79. Fred Holmes, in his recollections of German life in Wisconsin, wrote: "Social life today offers few meeting places like the old German saloon. Compared with it, the modern tavern is an arrogant pretender." In the German *bierstube* "all mingled as a single family united by the bonds of homeland and community of tastes." Fred L. Holmes, *Side Roads: Excursions into Wisconsin's Past* (Madison, 1949), pp. 63-66. See also Lewis Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border* (Bloomington, Ind., 1954), p. 58.

[23] Louis H. Pink, "The Cafe--A Substitute for the Saloon," *The Independent*, 60(1906), pp. 508-510.

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the jocular conversations of Mr. Martin Dooley and Hennesey by Finley Peter Dunne. Dooley operated an imaginary saloon on Chicago's Archer Avenue where he regularly assessed the day's topics with his favorite customer, Mr. Hennesey. Politics, said Mr. Dooley, was a serious game "an' pro-hybitionits'd do well to keep out iv it."[24] On a more somber level the saloon did function as an important adjunct of the urban machine as the political activities of "Bathhouse John" Coughlin and "Hinky Dink" Kenna, the bosses of Chicago's First Ward, demonstrated.[25] The immigrant workers of *The Jungle* soon found that the social institution of the saloon was under the protection of the local ward boss: "The saloon-keeper stood in with all the big politics men in the district, and when you had once found out what it meant to get into trouble with such people, you would know enough to pay what you were told to pay and shut up."[26] The saloon-keeper kept tabs on the floating population of the immigrant neighborhoods, and could be counted on to supply the "repeaters" used by the city machines on election day to cast multiple votes. The open recruitment of "repeaters" from the saloons led most states to close all public drinking places while the polls were open. One Lithuanian butcher workman of Chicago later recalled his early political connection with the saloon:

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[24] See Finley Peter Dunne, *Mr. Dooley on Ivrything and Ivrybody* (New York, 1963), pp. 508-510.

[25] Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan, *Bosses In Lusty Chicago* (Bloomington, Ind., 1971), pp. 23-33.

[26] Sinclair, *The Jungle*, p. 21.

> The Republican boss in our district, Jonidas, was a saloon keeper. A friend took me there. Jonidas shook hands and treated me fine. He taught me to sign my name and the next week I went with him to an office and signed some papers, and then I could vote.[27]

Critics of urban machime politics complained that it was only in the saloon that workers and immigrants received their political education in the workings of American democracy. There, bemoaned George Parsons, "he is introduced to the lowest intrigues of factional conflict. There he is taught that the chief end and aim of politics is to make as much as possible for the 'workers'."[28] Even more than this, the saloon developed "the socialistic or anarchist sentiments" which the immigrants brought with them from Europe.

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[27] "From Lithuania to the Chicago Stockyards," in Eli Ginzberg and Hyman Berman, *The American Worker In The Twentieth Century* (Glencoe, Ill., 1963), p. 49. For a comparable view see Constance M. Green, *Holyoke, Massachusetts: A Case History of the Industrial Revolution In America* (New Haven, 1939), p. 263.

[28] George F. Parsons, "The Saloon in Politics," *Atlantic Monthly*, 58 (1886), p. 406; "The Saloon in Society," *Atlantic Monthly*, 59 (1887), p. 90. The saloon, the *New York Times* editorialized, "strengthens, if it does create, the selfish and sordid kind of politics from which we suffer." *New York Times*, March 26, 1873.

The Saloon as a Working-class Institution

The saloon of the working-class neighborhood was an egalitarian institution whose doors swung open for all. It was an institution where men of varied backgrounds mingled on terms of social democracy. The saloon, the Rev. George L. McNutt remarked, was the "one democratic club in American life."[29] The membership fee was only a nickle, the price of a glass of beer. From city to city "men in work clothes, with dinner pails on their arms and mourning bands under their fingernails, could meet with their peers, to joke, talk, and think without inhibitions."[30] The working man finds in the saloon, a critic admitted, "an excitement, a companionship, which are seductive."[31] The unfettered flow of conversation in the saloon, Samuel Gompers wrote, "had a peculiar freedom from formality that engendered good fellowship and exchange of genuine intimacies."[32]

The saloon of the urban worker provided many services which limited municipal governments could not undertake and voluntary social agencies failed to provide. Those who saw the more positive attributes of the saloon generally stressed its essential appeal to the social needs of the worker. The Rev. Charles A. Stelzle, the influential social gospel minister of New York City, pointed out other services the saloon offered:

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[29] George L. McNutt, "Why Workingmen Drink," Outlook, 69 (1901), p. 115.

[30] Gerald Carson, "The Saloon," American Heritage, (April, 1963), p. 104.

[31] Parsons, "The Saloon in Society," p. 89.

[32] Samuel Gompers, Seventy Years of Life and Labor, II (New York, 1925), p. 176.

> It was in the saloon that the workingmen in those days held their christening parties, their weddings, their dances, their rehearsals for singing societies, and all other social functions. It was here that they were given opportunity to play billards, pool, and cards; and often there was a bowling alley. Sometimes there was a gymnasium. In most cases the customers were freely supplied with newspapers. Music was funished, especially in connection with summer gardens. More important than most of us think was the free lunch that was offered with a schooner of beer.[33]

The saloon-keeper was "a social force in the community." He often provided bond when the worker could not satisfy the demand of the local bondsman for surety. He often lent money to those in need without forcing them to meet the demands of the "means" test used by private charity organiations. "No questions were asked as to whether or not the recipient was deserving," wrote Stelzle.[34]

The saloon provided other services of a less glamourous nature. Saloons provided public water-closets and urinals long before most municipal governments began to construct them in city squares and parks.[35] Even though Stelzle was an ardent supporter of the Eighteenth Amendment he admitted that the saloon had a certain virtue all its own: "The old-time saloon has acquired a very unsavory name, and undoubtedly it has deserved most of the things said about it. But very few temperance reformers have, or ever had, any conception of what the saloon meant to the workingman."[36]

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[33] Charles Stelzle, A Son of the Bowery (New York, 1926), pp. 47-48.

[34] Ibid.

In 1893 the private citizens' Committee of Fifty was organized to study the liquor traffic, the saloon, and American drinking patterns and to recommend specific proposals for reform. In 1897 the sociologist E. C. Moore published a summary of his study of the social importance of the saloon in Chicago's Nineteenth Ward conducted on behalf of the committee. The ward was predominantly working-class, and most of the unskilled workers who comprised the majority of the population of 48,000 came from Irish, German, Italian, and Bohemian ethnic backgrounds.[37]

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[35] McNutt, "Why Workingmen Drink," p. 115. "The saloon is often the only place in crowded sections of our larger cities which provides public toilet-rooms. This provision, which belongs properly to the municiplaity, has in America been left to the hotels and the saloons." The Rev. Raymond Calkins, Substitutes For The Saloon, p. 5.

[36] Stelzle, A Son of the Bowery, p. 47.

[37] E. C. Moore, "The Social Value of the Saloon," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol, III, No. 1(1897), pp. 1-17. On the origins of the Committee of Fifty see: Charles D. Warner, "Editor's Study," Harper's Magazine, (February, 1897), pp. 483-484; Francis G. Peabody, "Substitutes for the Saloon," Forum, 21 (1896), pp. 595-606.

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"As to moral condition," Moore observed, "neither the extremes of vice nor virtue are reached, while the general moral tone is rather heathful."[38]

Moore found the saloon to be the major social center of the working-class community. Warm in the winter, cool in the summer, well-lighted and generally clean, the saloon came closer to the ideal of luxury than the homes of most workers. The typical drinking establishment of the Nineteenth Ward provided the popular resources of working-class recreation: cards, billards, newspapers, and even a few gymnasia free to patrons. Moreover, the saloon as a "democratic" society required no business meetings, elections of officers, or elaborate ritual. Patrons arrived and left as they wished and were free to mix or remain alone as they desired. By contrast Moore found that the ward contained only four churches and not a single music hall or theatre.[39]

The only social figure who maintained a constant open-house was the salooon-keeper, and his invitation was a standing one. Perhaps the most celebrated aspect of the urban working-class saloon was its "free" lunch, and according to Moore the food served in most of the ward's saloons was good and inexpensive. "That the saloon feeds thousands and feeds them well no one will deny who has passed the middle of the day there," he observed.[40] A second investigator of the saloon in Chicago, Royal L. Melendy, found that 68% of the saloons in the Seventeenth Ward offered free lunches.[41] Most served several kinds of meats, cheeses, vegetables, frankfurters, clams, hot potatoes, and egg sandwiches. One saloon estimated that it used almost two hundred pounds of meat and two bushels of potatoes a day to satisfy the hunger of its customers. The brewing companies owned many of the saloons under the system of "tied houses" and no doubt carried the financial burden of feeding the city's poorer workers.

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[38] Moore, "The Social Value of the Saloon," p. 2.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

The menu of the "free" lunch varied from neighborhood to neighborhood and city to city. George Ade, the social historian of the saloon in Chicago, wrote that a typical lunch might include roast turkey, spiced ham, ribs of beef, potato chips, sandwiches, cheese, and summer sausage.[42] In Milwaukee the menu included baked ham, sausage, baked beans, salad, and vegetables at the better saloons. In Madison, Wisconsin, poor students and poorly paid state legislators existed on "free" lunches of calves liver and onions, hot potatoes and beef, and pickles and bologna.[43] Patrons were permitted to help themselves at the buffet table as long as they spent their money at the bar. The saloon-keeper maintained a vigilant eye over his customers and hangers-on were quickly ushered out the swinging doors. Melendy estimated that the saloons of Chicago fed more of the poor than all of the charities of the city combined.[44]

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[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

[41] Royal L. Melendy, "The Saloon in Chicago," Part I, *The American Journal of Sociology*, VI (1900-1901), pp. 289-306. The saloon "does much to assimilate the heterogeneous crowds that are constantly pouring into our city from foreign shores," he added.

[42] George Ade, *The Old-Time Saloon* (New York, 1931), p. 34.

In addition to the social attractions of the saloon, enterprising immigrants and workers found the saloon business a profitable trade to enter since little capital was required. Many of the working-class saloons were located in converted houses or closed-off living rooms and back kitchens. The competitive brewing companies were willing to purchase premises and equip them in order to insure outlets for their products. Company-owned saloons were called "captive" saloons, or "tied houses". In Rochester, New York, the three leading breweries were purchased by an English syndicate and the system of "tied houses" was instituted to stablize the market for their malt beverages.[45] The less prosperous saloon-keeper was at least assured his salary and if his losses were too great the brewer was often willing to absorb a portion of them.

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[43] Holmes, *Side Roads*, p. 75.

[44] Melendy, "The Saloon in Chicago."

[45] Blake McKelvey, *Rochester, The Flower City, 1855-1890* (Cambridge, Mass., 1949), p. 240. See also Bessie L. Pierce, *A History of Chicago*, Vol. III, *The Rise of A Modern City, 1871-1893* (New York, 1957), p. 150.

The occupation of saloon-keeper, while not socially respectable, offered the possibilities of a steady income, influence in the neighborhood, and access to politics. Tavern-keeping proved a reliable means for upward mobility. In Holyoke, Massachusetts, the rapid influx of immigrants soon led to ethnic competition in the saloon trade:

> The immoral or indifferent newcomer was quick to discover that in selling liquor he had a commodity always in demand. Many were the families that were helped on the way to prosperity by selling over the grocer's counter, 'a can of kerosene' in which a potato served as a stopper, the unofficial insignia of an intoxicating fluid within.[46]

The Irish saloon-keeper displaced the Englishman as many of the Irish acquired the minimal amount of capital necessary to enter the business, and in turn he was supplanted by the Italian and the Slav.

The Rev. Peter Roberts in his study of the Pennsylvania anthracite coal communities after the great Anthracite Strike of 1902 noted the rapid influx of Slavs in the coal town saloons.[47] Roberts concentrated his study on the counties of Lackawanna, Luzerne, and Schuylkill, an area of mixed English-speaking and Slavic miners. During the ten-year period from 1890 to 1900 a large number of Slavs entered the saloon business in direct competition with the older Irish and English owners. In Mahonoy City, an older Irish coal town, there were only four Slavic saloon owners in 1890, but within ten years there were thirty-eight.[48] By 1900 the Slavs were second only to Irish saloon-keepers, and outnumbered the Americans, Germans, and Welsh in the keeping of taverns.[49]

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[46] Green, Holyoke, p. 123.

[47] Roberts, Anthracite Communities, p. 229. Victor R. Greene, The Slavic Community On Strike: Immigrant Labor In Pennsylvania Anthracite (Notre Dame, Ind., 1968), p. 48.

In the coal town of Shenandoah the intrusion of the Slavs in the liquor trade was even more marked than in Mahonoy City. In 1890 there were only fourteen Slavs who sold intoxicating beverages, ranking fourth behind the Irish, Americans, and Germans. By 1900, however, there were over one hundred saloon owners of Slavic background in the town, outnumbering all other ethnic groups combined.[50]

The aspiring Slavic miner saw in the saloon an easy access to the American business community and an enhanced self-image based on the pride of ownership. Since the Pennsylvania courts were reluctant to grant licenses to recently naturalized citizens, most of those who became saloon-keepers did so by acquiring a small amount of capital and buying out the previous owner who then transferred the license to the purchaser. The tavern trade was one of the most accessible avenues for economic mobility open to the immigrant-worker in American society.

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[48] Roberts, Anthracite Communities, p. 229.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid. The typical saloon in the coal community provided many important services for the immigrant worker: "such as holding the immigrants' earnings--the so-called 'immigrant banks'--notarizing papers, forwarding money orders home, acting as transportation agents, affording accomodations, interpreting and translating, giving generous credit to countrymen, and even writing letters for the illiterate." Greene, The Slavic Community on Strike, pp. 47-49. For later attitudes see Herman R. Lantz, People of Coal Town (New York, 1956), pp. 90-100.

The Saloon "Problem"

While the working man undoubtedly benefitted in a general sense from the "free" lunch, the friendly bartender, and the sociability of the saloon, he paid for those benefits across the bar with his hard-earned wages. Labor-temperance reformers argued that he was exploited, not served, by the saloon and paid dearly for what he saw as benefits. The saloon, wrote the author of *Zury* and *The McVeys*, Joseph Kirkland, "takes in good money but pays only false tokens." The savings of the rich, he concluded, "are as nothing compared with the wastings of the poor. Beer is the alleviation and perpetuation of the poor."[51] The simple fact of the matter was that laborers were encourage to insobriety by the presence of the saloon,

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[51] Joseph Kirkland, "Among the Poor of Chicago," in Robert A. Woods, *et. al.*, *The Poor in Great Cities* (New York, 1895), p. 208.

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and as long the old attachment to the saloon continued the worker would remain part of the submerged half of American society--the poor. Or so went the argument of the critics of the saloon. To support their argument they cited two important trends in the pattern of consumption and dispensing of alcoholic beverages. The first was that the per capita consumption of alcoholic beverages was rising, and secondly that the unregulated spread of the saloon threatened to engulf entire neighborhoods. In Chicago Kirkland counted sixty saloons in a two-block area alone.

There was ample evidence to support the contention that Americans were drinking more in the last half of the nineteenth century. The increase in the legal consumption of alcoholic beverages, including beer and wines, was documented in the rate of withdrawals of spirits kept for federal tax assessments and the taxation rate of malt beverages. In 1850 Americans consumed more distilled liquors than brewed beverages at the rate of 2.24 gallons per capita of distilled spirits to 1.58 gallons of malt beverages.[52] After the Civil War the older pattern of consumption began to change as the diversity of immigration introduced a greater demand for beer and other malt beverages such as porter.

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[52] U. S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1911 (Washington, 1912), p. 572.

Every decade after 1860 denoted an increased per capita consumption of intoxicants. From 1870 until Woodrow Wilson's election in 1912 the per capita consumption increased steadily:

1860	6.43(gallons per capita)
1870	7.70
1880	8.79
1890	13.21
1900	17.76
1905	19.85
1911	22.79 [53]

Malt beverages, particularly beer, accounted for the rapid increase in total consumption. By the Progressive Era America had clearly become a nation of beer-drinkers, and it was the most popular beverage of the working class aside from water, which in the rapidly industrializing urban centers was often too impure to drink.[54] The increase of consumption kept pace with the urbanization and industrialization of American society. Reformers now spoke of alcoholism as the disease of industrial society.

As the popular consumption of beer and distilled spirits increased, so did the number of institutions dispensing those beverages. According to the *Tenth Census* of the United States, New York contained over 9,000 drinking estalishments in 1880, San Francisco over 8,000,

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[53] *Ibid.*

[54] See Nelson M. Blake, *Water For The Cities: A History Of The Urban Water Supply Problem In The United States*

Philadelphia over 4,000, and Chicago over 3,000.[55] The total number of saloons in 1880 for the United States was estimated at slightly over 66,000 for cities with a population of 5,000 or more, while there was an undetermined number of unlicensed establishments operating illegally in numerous urban communities.

Temperance reformers who advocated a strict licensing of saloons considered the optimum ratio to be one saloon for every 1,000 people, and a minimal ratio to be one saloon per 500 people. In 1894 Carroll Wright, of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, issued a special report on slum conditions in Baltimore, Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia which revealed the rampant expansion of the saloon after the Civil War. In three of the cities the ratio of saloons to population fell below the 1:500 level. Only Philadelphia approached the optimum ratio:

New York	1:200
Philadelphia	1:870

(Syracuse, 1956), *passim*.

[55] *Tenth Census of the United States, Report on the Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes of the Population of the United States*, Vol. XXI, (Washington, 1888), pp. 566-574. The report on social statistics of American cities, vols. XVIII and XIX of the census, listed arrest statistics for the major urban centers. In Boston there were 24,507 recorded arrests; 14,267 were for drunk and disorderly conduct (1879). In Chicago, St. Louis, and Milwaukee approximately 50% of the total number of arrests were for public drunkenness or disorderly behavior. Public drunkenness was considered to be a major urban problem and one of the main justifications for enlarging urban police departments.

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Baltimore	1:229
Chicago	1:212[56]

Wright's survey included specialized statistics for the dispersion of the saloon in working-class and immigrant neighborhoods which indicated that the saloon tended to localize in the neighborhoods of the poor, those who could least afford to spend their surplus wages on intoxicating beverages. In the poorer neighborhoods the ratio of saloons to population fell below the 1:500 level:

New York	1:129
Philadelphia	1:502
Baltimore	1:105
Chicago	1:127[57]

The contention of temperance reformers that the saloon "problem" was primarily a working man's problem was reinforced by the ecological distribution of the saloon which was heavily concentrated in working-class and industrial sections of major cities.

In communities where license fees were low and regulatory supervision lax, the saloon flourished unfettered. Roberts estimated that there were at least 3,000 saloons in the coal communities of Pennsylvania. In several of the communities the ratio of saloons to population was startling. In at least three coal towns there was one saloon for one hundred people or less: West Hazleton, 1:78.6; Freeland, 1:75; and M'Adoo, 1:68.4.[58] In Schuylkill County, the center of the anthracite region, there was one saloon for every fifty adult males.[59] Margaret Byington of the Pittsburgh Survey enumerated fifty saloons in the steel community of Homestead; eight of them located in a single block clustering near the entrance to the mills.[60]

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[56] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Seventh Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor* (Washington, 1894), p. 14.

[57] *Ibid.*

As municipal authorities moved to limit the proliferation of drinking establishments by high-license fees, local option, abolition of Sunday sales, and limiting the number of saloons to a high per capita ratio, the saloon was driven from the older to the newer neighborhoods of the city. When angry suburban residents reacted by prohibiting saloons and taverns through local-option laws, the counterpressure forced saloons to remain in the immigrant and working-class districts.

In 1894 the college community of Cambridge, Massachusetts, organized to halt the intrusion of the saloon from nearby neighborhoods. Somerville, an adjacent community, passed a no-license law in 1884 forcing saloon owners to cross the boundary into Cambridge. When a saloon-keeper applied for a license irate citizens led by Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard and the Citizens Law Enforcement League persuaded the Board of Aldermen to reject the application.[61] The reason for citizen concern, one opponent explained, was the "loading us down" with saloons under the "absence of any population limit to the granting of licenses."

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[58] Roberts, Anthracite Communities, p. 231.

[59] Ibid., p. 223.

[60] Margaret F. Byington, Homestead: The Households of a Mill Town, Vol. IV of the Pittsburgh Survey, (New York, 1910), p. 27.

In fighting the intrusion of the saloon the Law Enforcement League solicited the support of the working men of the community. A circular, addressed to the laborers of Cambridge, urged them to join in the effort to exclude the saloon:

> What man has gone to his family on Saturday night richer or happier because of the saloon-keeper? Have they not used every means to get away hard-earned dollars that they might live in idleness while your wives and children are suffering? Have they not set themselves up to be your leaders in politics?[62]

Special delegations were organized to greet workers at the factory gates to garner support for a special election

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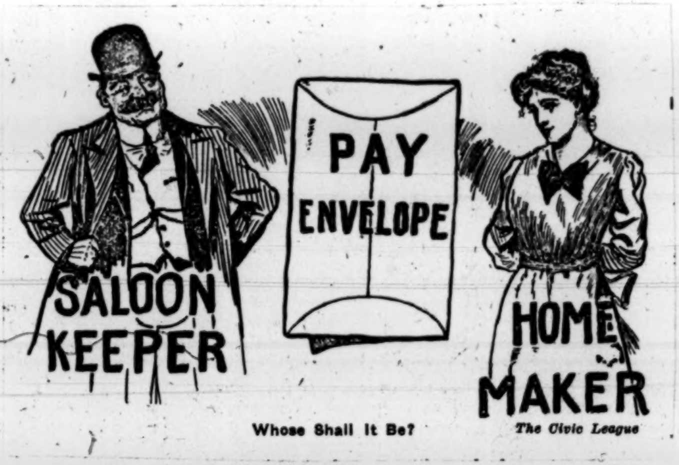
[61] The Citizens' No-License Committee, *Ten No-License Years in Cambridge* (Cambridge, Mass., 1898), pp. 195-196. For a similar pattern of expanding and unregulated saloons in the communities of Minneapolis and St. Paul see Edwin Patterson Sanford, "The Saloon Within Patrol Limits," *The Outlook*, Vol. XXVII (1904), pp. 984-987. The *Progressive Journal* favored local-option laws to limit the spread of the saloon, "Home Rule and the Saloon," *The Outlook*, Vol. XXX (1909), pp. 866-867.

[62] *Ten No-License Years in Cambridge*, p. 180.


SALOON KEEPER
PAY ENVELOPE
HOME MAKER
The Civic League

Whose Shall It Be?

(The Union Signal)

on a no-license law. The Rev. Alexander Blackburn told the employees of the George R. Oliver Piano Company that: "The more the saloon-keeper prospers the more hunger and cold and nakedness, the more discord and tears and sorrow; his prosperity means adversity in the community."[63]

The struggle to halt the expansion of the saloon brought together a number of reform and working-class representatives. Members of the clergy, including four Catholic priests led by Father Thomas Scully, Charles Eliot Norton and other Harvardites, the WCTU, and the Knights of Labor contributed to the success of the special election. Charles H. Litchman, General Secretary of the Knights of Labor and a former officer of the Knights of St. Crispin, travelled from Philadelphia to Cambridge to encourage workers to vote against the saloon. The conviction shared by the reformers was that a community without saloons was a better community in which to live and work. By the end of the century labor critics had taken the measure of the saloon and had found its disadvantages to outweigh by far any of its more popular features. As long as the saloon existed, working men would be tempted to spend their surplus wages on intoxicating beverages. In a consumer-oriented society the pattern of consumption naturally became the focus of labor reformers.

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[63] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Patterns of Consumption

One of the most implacable foes of the saloon was John Mitchell of the United Mine Workers Union. "Johnny Mitch," as the miners knew him, blamed the saloon for the inability of the worker to save the small surplus of wages that remained when the necessities of life were satisfied. The habit of intemperance was a continual inducement to spend what ought to be saved:

> I am against the saloons because they are against my people. On pay day the saloon-keepers are like tigers. My men enter their resorts with their wages, and often leave them with nothing, and then the wives must pacify the storekeepers for the non-payment of bills, and the family is left practically destitute. Our union stands for temperance, and better and more decent men.[64]

The question of just how much of their wages workers spent with the saloon-keeper was re-examined in the last decade of the century by critics of the saloon with the support and leadership of Carroll D. Wright, Commissioner of Labor.

In preparation for the seventh annual report of his office Wright gathered sample figures on the consumption patterns of American working-class families, including specific data for annual expenditures on intoxicating beverages.[65] Questionnaires were sent to 1,276 families and 733 reported family outlays for alcoholic beverages. Average yearly expenditures for intoxicants ranged from a low of $8.58 to a high of $54.84. Broken down by occupation the amounts spent in the saloon varied largely according to working conditions and the type of employment:

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[64] John Mitchell, "The Workingman and the Saloon, The Union Signal, January, 18, 1912, p. 12; Organized Labor: Its Problems, Purposes and Ideals and the Present and Future of American Wage Earners (Philadelphia, 1903), pp. 153-154. Mitchell's condemnations of intemperance and the saloon were always welcomed by the prohibitionists who reprinted his remarks in numerous anti-alcohol tracts and

Occupation	Intoxicants	Income	%
1. Pig Iron	$17.61	$591.61	2.98
2. Bar Iron	25.10	784.11	3.20
3. Steel	26.55	663.56	3.99
4. Bituminous Coal	18.09	550.30	3.29
5. Coke	20.25	572.57	3.54
6. Iron Ore	8.58	401.65	2.14
7. Cotton	15.98	657.76	2.43
8. Woollens	18.39	663.13	2.77
9. Glass	54.84	859.64	6.38[66]

While the work environment influenced the pattern of consumption--glass blowers who worked under conditions of intense heat spent the largest per-centage of income on intoxicants--the urban location of mills and factories, and the proximity of saloons to places of employment, also influenced spending habits.

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books; for example see Ferdinand C. Inglehart, King Alcohol Dethroned (Westerville, Ohio, 1919), p. 98.

[65] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor, 1891, Vol. II, Part III (Washington, 1892), p. 856. Ewan Clague discusses Wright's career and early studies at the BLS. Ewan Clague, The Bureau of Labor Statistics (New York, 1968), pp. 8-12.

[66] Seventh Annual Report, p. 856. Wright was a confirmed advocate of temperance for working men and as a government administrator he insisted that the employees of

Individual replies to the questionnaire often revealed expenditures for alcoholic beverages which must have had a staggering effect on family existence. For example one cotton worker reported that he spent $120.00 a year for spirits and beer when his income was only $293.52. Glass workers reported several individual cases where as much as one-third or one-half of the family's annual income went to the saloon-keeper.[67] A significant number of replies from glass workers, an occupation which included a large per-centage of immigrant laborers, reported annual expenditures over $150.00, and sometimes as high as $300.00 a year.[68] In the industrial states of New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts workers spent an average $18.58 yearly with the saloon-keeper.[69]

Allocating 2% to 3% on the average for intoxicants per year did not in itself impoverish the working-class family. In exaggerated cases where one-third or more of the budget was spent on alcoholic beverages poverty was certain to exist. What highlighted the worker's expenditures for intoxicants was the close margin between his income and outlay for the essential items of life.

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the BLS observe sober and steady work habits. A copy of Wright's work rules is reproduced in Clague, *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, photograph following p. 64.

[67] *Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, pp. 1514-1551.

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 1616-1617.

In the 1880s subsistence, meat and grocery items, consumed 40% to 50% of the average worker's budget; shelter, rent, and clothing also averaged between 40% and 45% leaving very little for sundry expenses or medical emergencies. The margin of surplus for saving was indeed small and explained why 80% or more of American working-class families rented rather than owned their own homes at the beginning of the twentieth century.[70]

Where the margin of surplus was small temperate habits made an important difference in the ability of the family to survive and prosper. For the nine occupational groups surveyed by Wright the margin between income and expenditures varied from only $10.00 to over $110.00 a year:

Occupation	Income	Expenditures	Margin
1. Pig Iron	$591.61	$546.25	$ 45.36
2. Bar Iron	784.11	671.50	112.61
3. Steel	663.56	563.50	101.06
4. Bituminous Coal	550.30	524.71	25.59
5. Coke	572.57	462.69	109.88
6. Iron Ore	401.65	390.93	10.72
7. Cotton	657.76	610.61	47.15
8. Woollens	663.13	594.09	69.03
9. Glass	859.64	769.06	90.58[71]

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[70] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Eighteenth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor, 1903, (Washington, 1904), pp. 474-475.

[71] Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor, p. 857. Disposal of income for a Massachusetts worker in 1883 was: subsistence (49.28%); clothing (15.95%); rent (19.74%); fuel (4.30%); and sundry expenses (10.73%). Ibid., p. 861.

The British consul in Chicago, after compiling a report on the wages and cost of living in the upper Midwest, added: "It will be seen how small comparatively are often the actual earnings when the rate of wages is considered, and, taking the cost of living into account, how small are the possible savings of a labouring man."[72] By abstaining and observing the prohibitions against saloon enticements an average iron-ore worker could double the annual marginal surplus of his budget and rise that much higher from the level of indigence.

Wright's report of 1891 also furnished statistical information on the ethnic factor in the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Among the cotton textile workers, Germans spent more for intoxicants than any other group, $42.24, and among the woollens workers the Scots were the heaviest spenders, $55.92.[73] The single ethnic cluster reporting the highest expenditures for intoxicants was the Belgian glass workers, $107.45 a year, or one-third of their annual food budget.[74] By contrast the Pittsburgh Survey found that the Slavic steel workers of Homestead spent .55¢ a week, out of an average weekly income of $12.00, for intoxicants. This was more than the average

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[72] "Report on the Earnings of Labour and Cost of Living in the Consular District of Chicago," Foreign Office, 1892, *Area Studies*, *British Parliamentary Papers*, p. 673.

[73] *Seventh Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, pp. 1711, 1721.

[74] *Ibid.*

XUM

spent for fuel a week and one-third of the amount allocated for clothing.[75] It was a social custom among the Slavs to pool their money on pay day to buy a case of beer which they divided and drank at home on the front stoop. Margaret Byington found that many of them were "heavy drinkers" and the saloon-keepers "exploited the needs of the adults for recreation and refreshments."[76]

The annual report issued by the Commissioner of Labor in 1903 failed to ease the growing concern of temperance advocates, for one out of every two working men reported expenditures for alcoholic beverages.[77] The average laboring family reported $24.53 spent on intoxicants, almost as much as the family spent on medicines, doctor bills, and death expenses every year.[78] In Connecticut native-born workers spent an average $23.78 yearly with the liquor sellers, which was more than they paid in union dues, or gave to the church, and almost as much as they spent for furniture and utensils. It was three times more than they spent for books and newspapers, three times what they spent for other amusements, and almost equal to the annual clothing budget of the head of the family.[79]

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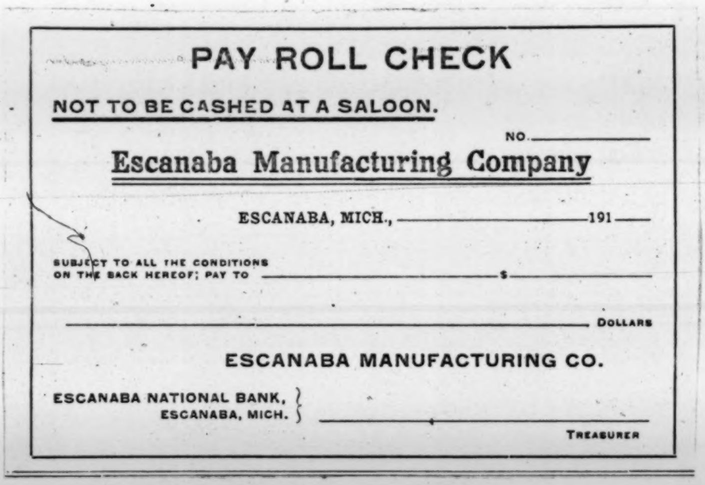
[75] Byington, Homestead, p. 140.
[76] Ibid., pp. 112-113.
[77] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Eighteenth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor, 1903, (Washington, 1904), pp. 501-509.
[78] Ibid., p. 509.
[79] Ibid., pp. 452-453.



PAY ROLL CHECK

NOT TO BE CASHED AT A SALOON.

NO. ______

Escanaba Manufacturing Company

ESCANABA, MICH., ______ 191__

SUBJECT TO ALL THE CONDITIONS
ON THE BACK HEREOF; PAY TO ______ $ ______

______ DOLLARS

ESCANABA MANUFACTURING CO.

ESCANABA NATIONAL BANK,
ESCANABA, MICH. ______
TREASURER

(The Union Signal)

XUM

Twenty-three dollars was the equivalent of two months' rent. The information gathered in Connecticut revealed that foreign-born workers spent less on intoxicants than native-born workers, and the Italians spent the least, only $5.00 a year.[80]

Questionnaires were sent to 2,567 families in commercial and industrial states. In twelve states over 60% of the responding workers reported a part of their budget spent on intoxicants:

State	% Reporting Intoxicants
1. Alabama	86.67%
2. Delaware	60.00
3. Kansas	76.47
4. Louisiana	75.00
5. Minnesota	67.50
6. New York	73.04
7. North Carolina	90.00
8. Rhode Island	81.25
9. South Carolina	95.00
10. Texas	61.11
11. West Virginia	73.68
12. Wisconsin	66.67[81]

Wright found that at the end of the year both native and foreign-born workers averaged only 6.58% to 6.80% in unexpended income, leaving still a small cushion for savings and emergencies.

In 1897 Wright devoted particular attention in his annual report to the economic aspects of the liquor problem. In an effort to assess the economic role of the saloon on pay day, he reported a survey conducted by a coal company operating in Chicago and Milwaukee. Most of the workers employed by the company cashed their pay checks in saloons rather than in grocery stores or savings banks. In Chicago 77% of the Hungarian and Polish workers cashed their checks in neighborhood saloons, 74% of the Scots and Irish, but only 9% of the Swedes and Norwegians did so.[82] Two-thirds of the English and native-born Americans went directly to the saloon after they were paid, and, no doubt, left a portion of their wages with the bar-tender in the process of cashing their checks.

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid., pp. 504-505.

In Milwaukee every one of the Hungarian and Polish coal workers cashed their checks in the saloon, 64% of the Germans, and 35% of the English, American, Swedish, and Norwegian employees.[83] The company paid its employees on Tuesday, in an effort to discourage the habit of check-cashing on Saturday nights in the saloon, but most of the workers went directly to the saloon anyway. Clearly the social attraction of the saloon drew the worker, since grocery stores regularly sold intoxicants in competition with the saloon and employees could have just as easily satisfied their thirst there.[84] Of those establishments selling intoxicants, other than the saloon, grocery stores predominated over restaurants and drug stores in dispensing alcoholic beverages in the local neighborhood.[85]

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[82] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Twelfth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor, 1897, "Economic Aspects of the Liquor Problem" (Washington, 1898), p. 78.

[83] Ibid., pp. 78-79.

[84] Ibid., pp. 118-119.

The transition from a pre-industrial to an industrial society necessitated a critical reassessment of the spending priorities of the worker and his family. Survival , and eventually stability, required that workers reappropriate their wages to guard against indigence and self-inflicted poverty. Temperance reform became, then, not so much a moral question as an economic one. In confronting the new hardships of the economy the industrial worker had to save, work hard, and abstain to advance economically. "Equally important," writes Neil J. Smelser, "the independent breadwinner should follow the appropriate performance-centered values of consumption; he should gear his expenditures to those kinds of motivational spending and saving which would enhance his family's economic productivity, and hence render them independent of indigence."[86] When the unexpended income of the worker equalled only 4% or 5% a year intemperance had become a burden too costly to bear.

"Treating"

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[85] Ibid., p. 118.

[86] Neil J. Smelser, Social Change In the Industrial Revolution (Chicago, 1959), p. 344.

When the Commissioner of Labor asked employers to account for the major factor contributing to the intemperance of their workers one replied: "From about thirty years' observation I am convinced that the bad habit of 'treating' is the cause of more drunkenness than any other one thing."[87] Another employer urged the abolition of "treating" as a major step in the promotion of sobriety: "Prohibition increases the desire for whisky, wine, and beer. The abolition of the 'treating' habit of our people would decrease consumption, increase sobriety, and solve the liquor problem."[88] The social custom of "treating," or buying "rounds," was a continuation of the older tradition of "usage" money and guild amercements common to both British and continental workers. Laborers as well as employers recognized that "treating" was a major source of impoverishment for those workers who habitually visited the saloon.

After studying the custom of "treating" among the railway workers R. C. Redfield argued that the demonstration of largess in the saloon was responsible for an excessive amount of drunkenness among all working men.[89] The social fashion, he wrote, was for good-natured fellows

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[87] Twelfth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor, p. 80.

[88] Ibid.

[89] MJ, May, 1873, pp. 209-210.

"to seize upon their friends, and give them a good stand-up drink at the bar."[90] One always treated one's friends and it was still the custom to "wet" new boots and new clothes by buying a round of drinks. The rule of hospitality dictated that the buyer "treat" everyone in the saloon, for failure to do so would be considered an "insult" to those present. "A large portion of our American people," wrote Redfield, "seemed to be possessed of the fact, that the best of friendship lays at the bottom of a glass of whisky."[91]

If workers must drink, Redfield suggested, let them buy their own and no one else's "treats". He praised the French and German workers for their reluctance to buy rounds and suggested that "Dutch treating" would lessen working-class insobriety. "The German people," he added, "will drink their beer and eat their predzels and seem to be very social, but on retiring from their sub-terranean slums, each one pays his own bill."[92]

The wide-spread practice of "treating" produced anti-treating campaigns by labor leaders and state governments, and the devising of state laws to restrict the working-class social custom. William Saul of the Knights of Labor denounced the "treating" habit as a dangerous "humbug" enslaving the working man to the saloon, and the general attitude of the Knights of Labor to the saloonkeeper was one of open hostility.[93]

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[90] *Ibid.*, p. 209. Contemporary social customs regulating bar and tavern conduct are described in Sherri Cavan, *Liquor License: An Ethnography of Bar Behavior* (Chicago, 1966), pp. 112-139.

[91] *MJ*, May, 1873, p. 210.

[92] *Ibid.*

Several of the state governments joined the anti-treating movement by prohibiting "treating" in any licensed saloon. In 1881 Wisconsin passed a law providing for fine and imprisonment for anyone offering a free drink to another.[94] Furthermore, anyone accepting a free drink was subject to the same punishment. "It is also not to be doubted," commented the New York Times after the passage of the act, "that the universal habit, among Americans, inviting each other at all hours of the day and night to stand up at a bar and take drinks of this, that, and the other intoxicating liquor is a very bad one, and leads to much drunkenness....."[95]

In 1885 the mining state of Nevada passed a similar anti-treating law, but with stiffer penalties. It was "unlawful....to treat or entertain gratuitiously any other person...with spirituous, or malt, liquor or liquors, wine or cider, or any beverage whatever...."[96] It was illegal to treat or accept a free drink in a bar, saloon, beer hall, or grocery store. Fines levied in violation of the law were scheduled to go into the Nevada state school fund, and might be as high as $20.00 for each infraction.

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[93] Journal of the Knights of Labor, June 12, 1890. Hereafter cited as: JKL.

[94] New York Times, March 30, 1881.

[95] Ibid.

[96] New York Times, March 29, 1885.

By the late 1880s many states prohibited a licensed seller of liquors from serving a known drunkard, or someone given to public intoxication. In Nebraska the state alcoholic beverage act levied the maintenance of intemperate paupers against the community's saloon-keepers in an effort to discourage habitual intoxication.[97] Pennsylvania attempted to regulate the custom of "treating" by prohibiting saloon-keepers from extending credit to their customers, or buying on "tick".[98] All such debts were made non-collectable by law. Efforts such as these discouraged "treating" and the social drinking of workers in the saloon but fell short of eleminating those deeply ingrained social habits.

Alternatives to the Saloon

American temperance reformers and foes of the saloon sought to duplicate some of the more successful experiment of British Victorians in establishing counter-attractions to the liquor-selling saloon. "Counter-attractionists" in England carried out model tavern schemes (taverns where no alcoholic beverages were sold!), opened and operated alternate places for paying wages, and improved recreational facilities for industrial families.[99] In the 1870s the experiment of the "People's Cafe Company of London" drew the admiration of American anti-saloon enthusiasts. The company was organized to provide cheap refreshments in pleasant, ~~non-alcoholic~~ surroundings for the working-class population of the city.[100] Capital was raised from small donations collected by the people of the neighborhood. The cafe offered reading materials, games, and other forms of recreation as an alternative to the saloon. The New York Times described the cafe as a lasting "advance in the cause of temperance" and suggested that it be imitated in the United States.[101]

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[97] "Report on Liquor Traffic Legislation in the Unit States, 1888," Area Studies, British Parliamentary Papers, p. 613.

[98] "Further Report on the Liquor Traffic Legislation in the United States, 1890," ibid., pp. 659-660.

In 1876 a bill to provide free reading rooms in every ward of New York City for working men was introduced in the state legislature.[102] The reading rooms were designed to attract young mechanics and laborers from the crowded tenements of the city by luring them away from the "neighboring saloon, which is bright and warm, and filled with jovial company."[103] A pilot reading room was opened in the city's First Ward and an estimated eighty to one hundred young mechanics visited it nightly. The New York Coffee-House Company, organized on the same principles as its London counterpart, provided coffee and tea in place of intoxicants for workers. Coffee houses were to be the new "social resorts, the clubs, and saloons of the workingmen."[104]

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[99] Harrison, Drink and The Victorians, pp. 348-361.
[100] New York Times, May 30, 1875.
[101] Ibid.
[102] New York Times, February 1, 1876.

One of the most unique coffee houses to be established was the "Tee-to-tum" Club opened in New York City by the Rev. Henry Saterlee of the Calvary Protestant Episcopal Church. The club was based on an English experiment of the same name led by P. G. Buchanan of Oxford House, London.[105] The facilities were formally opened in an old piano factory on East 23rd Street by Mayor Abram S. Hewitt.[106] The "Tee-to-tum" was planned to serve all the social demands of working men, with the exception of serving intoxicants, and maintained a restaurant which could feed five hundred people and provided a wholesome meal for only thirteen cents.[107] The club housed a meeting room for labor societies, a concert hall, a billiard room, reading rooms, a bowling ally, gymnasium, dormitory, and a chapel. The membership fee was only ten cents and the membership was composed mostly of "clerks, mechanics, and tradesmen."

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[103] Ibid.

[104] New York Times, March 7, 1880.

[105] New York Times, January 18, 1893.

[106] New York Times, March 24, 1893.

[107] New York Times, March 19, 1893.

Ballington Booth of the Volunteers of America suggested that cities buy the licensed saloons and operate them as model taverns where no alcoholic beverages were served.[108] In Portland, Oregon, Erickson's Saloon, which reportedly employed fifteen bar-tenders at the height of its prosperity, was converted into a "dry" saloon after 1900 with apparent success. "Fritz's Great Workingmen's Resort" offered cheap meals, free movies, a reading room, and baths to its customers.[109]

The urban churches continually supported plans to replace the saloon with a more beneficial institution for working men. Church-related coffee houses were opened in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and Boston, and the Temperance Society of the Episcopal Church contributed funds for night lunch wagons to divert working men from visiting the saloon.[110]

In 1893 Commissioner of Labor Carroll Wright released a special study on the Gottenburg System, which he felt American working men would be more willing to accept and support.[111] In his letter of transmittal Wright acknowledged that the regulation of the liquor traffic was one of the most pressing social questions of the moment, and particularly so for workers faced with the reduced wages and unemployment of a depression year: "The liquor question is essentially one of the social problems of labor, for the reason that working people suffer more from the evil consequences resulting from excessive use of strong drink than any other class."[112]

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[108] Ballington Booth, "Substitutes for the Saloon," The Independent, Vol. 54 (1902), pp. 317-318.

[109] W. H. Warren, "From Saloon to Workingman's Palace," The Union Signal, July 27, 1916, p. 4.

[110] New York Times, January 17, 1893; January 18, 1893

The Gottenburg System was devised in Sweden and spread quickly to Norway under the vigorous leadership of Dr. P. Wieselgren, a temperance reformer who was impressed by the hardships resulting from working-class insobriety. The crux of the reform movement was the removal of the profit motive from the liquor traffic. Under the Gottenburg plan a non-profit company was organized to acquire the existing liquor licenses, "solely for the good of the working classes," and the company then dispensed alcoholic beverages under very stringent regulations. Any customer who purchased a drink also had to buy something to eat, since intoxicants were not sold solely for the purpose of stimulating inebriation. No sales were permitted on credit or the exchange of pawn tickets for drinks. The income remaining after expenses were paid was assigned for the relief of paupers and indigent workers, or paid over to the town treasury.[113]

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[111] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Fifth Special Report of the Commissioner of Labor, "The Gottenburg System of Liquor Traffic," (Washington, 1893).

[112] Ibid., p. 8.

The system, which proved its success by 1867, converted the public houses of Sweden into lower-priced eating establishments for the workers, cut the number of drinking establishments in the country, and expanded other services to the laborers. The company closed its houses early in the evening, encouraging laborers to spend more time with their families, and served no one under 18 years old. Later five reading rooms for workers, furnished with newspapers and books, with temperance posters adorning the walls, were opened in conjunction with the reformed public houses. The reading rooms were established "to give persons of the working classes an opportunity ... to find entertainment in reading, and to obtain refreshments or lighter kinds of food, without frequenting places where ale, brandy, or other intoxicating liquors are served...."[114]

The managers of the Gottenburg houses were depicted as just the opposite of the American saloon-keeper. They were forbidden to sell to any intoxicated person, all customers were to be served with "civility and attention," and they sold only for "ready money paid down on the spot."[115] Furthermore, the dispensing system was completely divorced from politics and the solicitation of votes, which gave the Gottenburg idea an added advantage in the estimation of American reformers.[116] E. R. L. Gould and the temperance reformer, John Koren of Boston, concluded at the end of their survey of the Swedish reform plan that "it represents the best means which have yet been devised for the control of the liquor traffic where licensing is permitted at all...."[117] By 1900 the old enchantment with the saloon was dying and the search for alternatives to the saloon merged with the Prohibition movement which demanded no saloons at all. In the first weeks of 1917 John F. Cunneen of the American Federation of Labor announced "that if this nation lives, the saloon must die."[118]

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[113] *Ibid.*, p. 20 ff.

[114] *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

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[115] Ibid., p. 119.

[116] Ibid., p. 240. "The thing which strikes an American," the report noted, "as the most conspicuous merit of the company system is the complete divorcing of the liquor traffic from politics."

[117] Ibid., p. 243.

[118] John F. Cunneen, "The Workingman vs. the Saloon," The Union Signal, February, 1917, p. 4. Cunneen was one of the most vociferous spokesmen of the "dry" wing of the A. F. of L. and a constant critic of Gompers's attacks on Prohibition.

Through most of the nineteenth century the urban saloon was seen almost exclusively as the working man's cultural and political center in American society. It was his club and parlor, employment office and banker. By 1880, however, this view was challenged by those who blamed the saloon for the impoverishment of the worker and his subservience in politics. The Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor, spurred by Terence V. Powderly, the friend of Carroll Wright and Frances E. Willard of the WCTU, made a concerted effort to break the connection between the saloon and the laboring man.

CHAPTER V

"NO SALOON-KEEPERS NEED APPLY"

With the exception of the Industrial Workers of the World, no organization of working men had so great an impact on the American labor movement, and yet declined so quickly, as the Order of the Knights of Labor. Based on a renewed concept of the brotherhood of toilers--men and women, black and white--the Knights of Labor grew rapidly in the middle of the 1880s as workers rebelled against corporate policies shaped by and for the competitive struggle for profits. The envisioned dream of a "community of interests between farmers and workers" proved as illusory for the Knights as it had for the National Labor Union, although not without trial and failure.[1] "When bad men combine, the good must associate, else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle," the Order's constitution of 1878 proclaimed.[2] The fear of "pauperization" and the "degradation of the toiling masses" led to the establishment of a labor movement national in scope and universal in aspiration. In conformity with the reformist orientation of the Order there was a strong emphasis on temperate deportment and the tradition of the sober mechanic which Terence V. Powderly inspired and deftly maintained from 1879 to 1893.[3]

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[1] Gerald Grob, "The Knights of Labor, Politics, and Populism," Mid-America, Vol. 29(January, 1958), p. 14.

[2] Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor, Reading, Pennsylvania, 1878, p. 28.

Richard T. Ely, the liberal professor labor economics, praised the Knights of Labor in 1886 as one of the most influential temperance societies in the United States.[4] As a professor at The Johns Hopkins University, Ely studied the impact of intemperance on the working man and the counter-acting emphasis on sobriety by the Knights of Labor, which he thought absolutely beneficial for the material advancement of the American worker.[5] He praised the temperance worker in general as the true friend of the working man:

> Is it not evident that temperance workers are among the best friends of wage-earners of this country, and that any labor leader who has not

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[3] Powderly's reformist philosophy is dissected by Gerald Grob in "Terence V. Powderly and the Knights of Labor," Mid-America, Vol. 28 (January, 1957), pp. 39-55.

[4] Henry F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America (New York, 1967), pp. 140-142.

[5] Richard T. Ely, The Labor Movement in America (New York, 1886), p. 375. "A little later," Ely wrote, "I attended a fair of the Knights of Labor in Baltimore and found on sale no beverage stronger than lemonade." While Ely's reputation was that of a liberal economist, or even a radical, his advice to striking workers was hardly revolutionary: "I think that absolutely temperate strikers

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> sufficient mental power to grasp this, is unfit for his position? and, finally, that any intemperate laborer is an enemy to his class?[6]

Ely praised the discipline labor organizations wielded to reform or correct habits of thriftlessness and insobriety entrenched in the working classes. The labor unions, he wrote:

> are a vast army under the restraints of discipline, a great force is brought to bear on them to urge them to temperance in all things, and this is likely to have greater weight because it comes, not from professional temperance advocates, but has sprung up spontaneously in their own ranks.[7]

The Knights of Labor, and other labor organizations, were "perhaps the chief powers, in this country making for temperance," he added.[8]

The labor and reform newspaper publisher, John Swinton, in full accord with Ely, praised both the Knights of Labor and Terence Powderly for the unequivocal stand taken against the admission of liquor sellers to the Order:

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fleeing all association with saloons, opening every meeting of any sort with prayer, and holding a prayer-meeting or some kind of religious service every day, would inspire an unscrupulous individual or corporate employer with a new terror." Ibid., p. 380.

[6] Ibid., p. 381.

[7] Ibid., p. 131.

[8] Ibid., p. 130.

> The most deadly blow ever given to King Alcohol is in that declaration of the Knights of Labor which prohibits any liquor dealer from membership in the Order. It is doing more to put an end to drunkenness, and to bring the rum traffic under the ban, than all the laws of Maine or speeches of Gough ever did.[9]

If the Order's widely publicized ban against the admission of saloon-keepers evoked the merriment of later generations, in 1878 it was praised as a positive step in the struggle to elevate and enhance the character of the laboring mechanic; and no one took the ban more seriously than Powderly and the Knights of Labor.

Article I, Section 2, of the 1878 constitution governing the organization and conduct of local assemblies of the Knights of Labor stipulated that any person eighteen years or older, working for wages, was eligible for membership except that: "No person who either sells, or makes hi[illegible]ving by the sale of, intoxicating drinks, can b[illegible]itted, and no lawyer, doctor, or banker can be admitted."[10] While anyone might apply for admission to the Order, each candidate was screened by a committee of three to establish his good character and eligibility. All saloon-keepers were automatically excluded, and if a member entered the liquor trade after his initiation, the rules called for his immediate expulsion from the Knights of Labor. The exclusion of saloon-keepers followed the policies shaped earlier in the decade by the railroad brotherhoods and other craft unions, and was in no sense the peculiar position of the Knights of Labor.

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[9] *John Swinton's Paper*, January 10, 1886.
[10] *Proceedings*, 1878, p. 36.

The screening of each individual applicant by the membership committee of the local assembly was designed to eleminate any potential member who might embarrass the Order by his intoxicated conduct or drunkenness on the job. The policy of exclusion applied not only to saloon-keepers but to any known intemperate workman. The tremendous growth of the Knights of Labor in 1885-1886 made it virtually impossible to screen each applicant, or to exclude every latent seller of liquors.

The rules of conduct for members of the Order were set forth in Article V, Section 1, of the constitution.[11] Provisions for expulsion were stated clearly for any Knight charged with conduct unbecoming to a member in good standing. The local assembly was charged with the duty to dismiss any member guilty of habitual intemperance. The local assembly was free to punish the guilty member by fine, suspension, or expulsion, although suspension and expulsion required a two-thirds vote by the local membership. As Grand Master Workman, Terence Powderly urged every local assembly to enforce the ban against saloon-keepers and expel intemperate members. "Workingmen," he wrote, "shun strong drink as you would a scorpion."

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[11] _Ibid_.

The ban against saloon-keepers was based on the long experience of exploitation and impoverishment traced to the influence of the saloon in the social life of the worker. The owner of the saloon often enriched himself at the expense of the worker and his family, manipulated the political life of the laborer, and used his former ties with the union to importune his fellow workers on pay day. An open association with the saloon-keeper was considered degrading and even reprehensible. Labor radicalism, which the Knights of Labor always disavowed officially, was blamed on bar-room anarchists and bombers by a hostile press and pulpit. The decision to build a labor movement composed of intelligent and respectable workers of high moral character, immune from charges of radicalism and sullied values, denied admission to saloon-keepers without question.

"The Parent of Principle"

Terence V. Powderly, the leader of the Knights of Labor from 1879 to 1893, was the most influential spokesman for the temperance cause among working men in the Gilded Age. He was a friend of Frances E. Willard of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Carroll Wright,

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Richard Trevellick, Ralph Beaumont, and other labor-temperance reformers. He exhorted American workers to drink nothing stronger than cold water, as he did, and he consistently sought to identify the Knights of Labor with the national movement for the regulation of the liquor traffic. By lectures and letters, and the conventions of the Order, he carried his temperance ideals to the men and women who worked in the shops and sheds of America. He attended reform conventions for almost two decades where he spoke on behalf of the fusion of labor and temperance reform.[12]

Powderly's pronounced temperance views developed slowly as he grew up in the coal fields of Pennsylvania where the saloon was often the most powerful social institution in the life of the worker. The journal of the Knights of Labor advertized his Thirty Years of Labor, for only fifty cents a copy, to all temperance reformers "who would read words that will inspire and instruct." In his autobiography Powderly attacked rum as "a foe who inflicts more sorrow and...agony than lays in the power of the employer to mete out to his workman."[13] A typical advertisement for Thirty Years of Labor claimed: "The principles advocated on the Temperance Question and the author's abhorrence of Rum Drinking must necessarily place this work before the Woman's Christian Temperance Union as a boon companion in the cause in which they are working."[14]

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[12] Norman J. Ware, who argued that Powderly was far from a Prohibitionist, nevertheless admitted that he was a warm supporter of the WCTU, an organization infused with prohibitionist zeal: "...he was not a prohibitionist. He had too much respect for personal liberties to demand that others drink only water because it suited him. The Women's Christian Temperance Union was his firm friend but his temperance ideas helped to alienate the coopers and brewers." The Labor Movement in the United States,

Behind Powderly's dislike of alcoholic beverages and the saloon was the traumatic memory of the violence and death of the Molly Maguires. If the Irish coal miners of Schuylkill County had shunned the saloon and the liquor seller, wrote Powderly, "it would have redounded to the good name of labor, and innocent men would not have been punished on the scaffold for the crimes of others."[15] The true villain was the saloon which spawned intemperance and the real victim was the miner caught in its grasp. He blamed the saloon-keeper and a society which allowed the saloon to exist for the violence and bitterness of the Long Strike of 1875.[16] The aftermath of Mollyism impressed Powderly as a terrible lesson to be learned. The Knights of Labor learned

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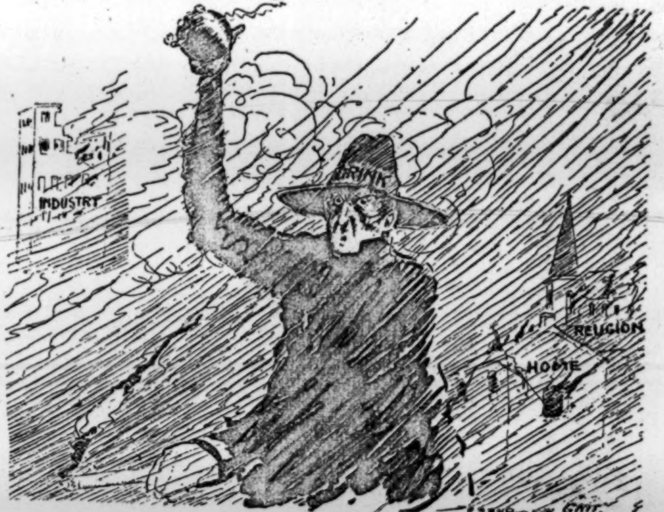
1860-1895: A Study in Democracy (New York, 1929), p. 89.

[13] Terence V. Powderly, Thirty Years of Labor (Columbus, Ohio, 1889), p. 581.

[14] JKL, March 26, 1891.

[15] Powderly, Thirty Years of Labor, pp. 583-584.

[16] Ibid., pp. 584-585.


DRINK
INDUSTRY
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HOME
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The Anarchist —*Grit*, of Australia.

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that security and secrecy were not enough; members must be both vigilant and temperate. The Order had taken up "the gauntlet against the intrusion of the agent of rum and forbade his entrance to an assembly of the order."[17]

As leader of the Knights of Labor Powderly often quoted Grand Secretary Charles H. Litchman's statement that "The two deadliest foes of labor are rum and ignorance." In his address to the annual assembly of the Knights in 1882 he placed heavy emphasis on the temperance principle. "No labor society ever admitted a rumseller that did not die a drunkard's death," Powderly stated.[18] The temperance question, he continued, "is a most important one, and I sometimes think it is the main issue...." He promised to enjoin upon his successors the importance of maintaining the exclusion of all liquor sellers for the success of the Knights. He earnestly hoped that his successor would shut the "doors with triple bars against the admission of the liquor dealer."[19]

Between 1879 and 1882 Powderly relied on moral suasion arguments to retain the constitutional prohibition against the saloon-keeper. At the 1882 convention he made clear his complete opposition to any attempt to weaken the exclusion principle: "...the moment it [rum] seeks to interfere with my rights by coming into the Knights of Labor, then my soul arises in arms against it, and I can find no words too bitter, no denunciations too scathing, to hurl against it."[20] Of all the words in the English language, he said on the same occasion, "I can find no word that strikes more terror to my soul than the one word, rum!"[21]

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[17] Ibid., p. 586.
[18] Ibid., p. 589.
[19] Ibid.

As the thrice-elected reform mayor of Scranton, Pennsylvania, Powderly attacked the influence of the saloon and the saloon-keeper in politics. In his campaign of 1878 he promised the voters of Scranton that his administration would not in any way become indebted to the saloon-keepers of the city. "As a politician," he remarked, "I am a living protest against the beer-swilling, back-biting, hand-wringing, saloon-haunting practices of the old time politicians...."[22] He urged the voters to cast their ballots on the issues, and the integrity of the candidates, and not "in exchange for beer, rum, or vile cigars." The slaves to liquor were always the slaves to the political bosses.

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[20] Ibid., p. 594.

[21] Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor, New York City, 1882, p. 284.

[22] Terence V. Powderly, The Path I Trod, edited by Harry J. Carman, Henry David, and Paul N. Gutherie (New York, 1940), pp. 74-76.

Powderly attacked the company store and unlicensed liquor establishment for catering to the intemperate habits of the worker as bitterly as he attacked the saloon in northeastern Pennsylvania. The company store in the coal towns sold liquor without a license and listed the sale on their account books as "sundries". Illegal groggeries existed solely to pick the pockets of the workers. "We talk of reforming the world," he complained, "why, we can not reform ourselves."[23] As GMW of the Order Powderly constantly bemoaned the inclination of workers to waste their leisure time in the saloon to their own detriment, or that of the Knights of Labor: "...they spend too much valuable time in saloons and groggeries when they should have been at home or at the meeting of an assembly of the Knights of Labor."[24]

At the annual convention of the Knights in 1885 he urged the delegates to approve the automatic expulsion of any member discovered in an intoxicated state during a strike or violent disruption with company officials. The success of the Wabash Strike and the Great Southwestern Strike sparked a tremendous increase in the membership of the Order and made it impossible to screen each applicant thoroughly. To prevent unncessary violence and rowdyism, Powderly urged the local assemblies to be as strict with intemperate members as they were in excluding the saloon-keeper.[25] "We legislate against the admission of the man who sells rum, and make a member of the man who supports him; this does not seem just nor fair. The character of the society is judged by the character of its members."[26] The Knights of Labor had been "altogether too lenient" with intemperate members and "the crime must be punished" in the prescribed manner, Powderly added. Disciplinary action in the form of the threat of suspension or expulsion supplemented the earlier emphasis on moral suasion and voluntary abstention from alcoholic beverages.

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[23] Powderly, Thirty Years of Labor, p. 597.

[24] Ibid., p. 596.

A second response by the Grand Master Workman to the rapid influx of new members was the circulation in 1886 of a special temperance appeal to the local assemblies calling for a renewal of voluntary efforts to reach and reform the intemperate member. "To our drinking member," the circular stated, "I extend the hand of kindness. I hate the uses to which rum has been put, but it is my duty to reach down and lift up the man who has fallen a victim to the use of liquor."[27]

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[25] _Proceedings_ of the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor, Hamilton, Ontario, 1885, p. 20.

[26] _Ibid_., pp. 20-21.

[27] Powderly, _Thirty Years of Labor_, p. 600.

In the temperance circular of 1886 Powderly asked each non-abstaining member of a local assembly to step forward and take the temperance pledge formally endorsed by the leadership of the Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor. "Powderly's Pledge," as it was soon called, demanded that each member give up the liquor habit in favor of sobriety and true independence. "I am a Knight of Labor," the pledge began:

> I believe that everyman should be free from the curse of slavery, whether that slavery appears in the shape of monopoly, usury or intemperance. The firmest link in the chain of oppression is the one I forge when I drown manhood and reason in drink. No man can rob me of the brain my God has given me unless I am a party to the theft. If I drink to drown grief, I bring grief to wife, child and sorrowing friends. I add not one iota to the sum of human happiness when I invite oblivion over the rim of a glass.[28]

The pledge concluded with a promise to be alert to the dangers of intemperance and to uphold the reputation of the sober workman.

"Powderly's Pledge" was administered in one local assembly after another, with little opposition from "personal liberty" advocates who might have charged that their right to inbibe was violated by internal pressure from the leaders of the Order to ascribe to the oath.

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[28] *Ibid*.

Between May and October, 1886, Powderly estimated that over 100,000 Knights had taken the pledge. At the Richmond convention of the Order in 1886 he suggested that: "It would be well if President Cleveland's Cabinet, and the members of both Houses of Congress, could be made subject to such a pledge as long as they hold office."[29]

Even though Powderly was not an infectious speaker, and he generally preferred the writing of letters to the giving of lectures, he was often willing to address public meetings of workers on the virtues of the temperance question. The greatest weapon raised against the labor movement, he told an audience at Boston's Mechanics Hall in June, 1887, was the raised glass of rum. Drink destroyed a working man's reason, loyalty, and determination. Give me, he asked the audience, "one hundred thousand or fity thousand sober, honest, earnest men, and I will wage the battle of labor more successfully than if you give me twelve million of men who drink either moderately or drink to excess."[30] Powderly welcomed the inclusion of women in the Knights of Labor, for, as he explained, "women do not drink," and they would be a proper moral example for the uplift of the character of the Order. In remarks made to an audience in the old shoe-making town of Lynn, Massachusetts, he continued on the same theme. In a fine exhibition of temperance oratory, Powderly pleaded: "Stop it, men, stop it! Not for a day or a week, but until God stops your life. It does no man any good. It does every one injury."[31]

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[29] John Swinton's Paper, November, 14, 1886.
[30] Powderly, Thirty Years of Labor, p. 604.

The uncompromising attitude of Powderly to the admission of saloon-keepers and the extension of that attitude to intemperate members created momentary tensions within the Knights of Labor, both with individual unions threatened by his cold-water ideals and those who saw no reason to mix temperance and labor economics. In 1883 there was a movement to establish a rival branch of the Knights of Labor that would admit saloon-keepers. The rival faction, calling itself the Improved Order of the Knights of Labor, issued circulars from Baltimore calling for local assemblies to break away from the main order and to admit saloon-keepers and bar-tenders.[32]

The circulars provoked Powderly into writing a bitter letter to Conrad J. Kraft of Baltimore in which the GMW denounced the splinter movement as a ploy by the liquor interests to destroy the "usefulness" of the Knights of Labor.[33] Powderly charged that the circulars were prepared at the instigation of saloon-keepers, those "who stole the widow's house and the orphan's bread." In the face of Powderly's opposition, and the lack of popular support within the Order, the Improved Order quickly disappeared. The opposition from craft unions remained quite strong, and eventually led to Powderly's ouster as GMW in 1893.

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[31] Powderly, Thirty Years of Labor, p. 605.

[32] Journal of United Labor, July, 1883. Hereafter cited as: JUL.

[33] Ibid.

Despite the criticism from such unions as the coopers and brewers, the leader of the Knights of Labor refused to dilute his temperance views. In a reply to his critics, "The Justice of My Position," Powderly rejected the accusation that his views were weakening the Order. Members who drank were weak, not only in character, but also in reliability. Furthermore, if the money spent at the saloon were spent on necessary items thousands of new jobs would be created for American workers.[34] In conclusion, he reaffirmed his intention to continue his temperance agitation, for, he added: "I know I am right."

Powderly's last important temperance address was drafted for the 1890 convention of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union which met in Pittsburgh. It was an eloquent appeal for working-class sobriety. In his address, entitled "Touch, Taste, Handle Not," he asked the delegates to look closely as they walked the streets of Pittsburgh;

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[34] Powderly, Thirty Years of Labor, pp. 606-607.

ninety per cent of those going in and out the doors of the saloons of the city were laborers. He encouraged all workers to walk the sober path. "If I am in poverty it should be my aim to elevate myself, and it is a stern duty with me to avoid that which will make me poor," he wrote.[35] The drinking man "is either at the bottom of the ladder or in danger of dropping there."

Powderly recalled that in 1868 he helped to organize the first Father Mathew Society for the miners of the Lackawana Valley in Pennsylvania. From years of working for the increased sobriety of the worker it was his conviction that intoxication stupified the worker and made him subject to the manipulation of the employer. "The drunken workingman cannot be depended on to do anything right, or at the right time; he is a slave to liquor, and the slave of liquor is now and has always been the slave of man."[36] His address concluded with the admonition to working men "to neither touch, taste, nor countenance the use of liquor."

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[35] JKL, August 14, 1890. "About the only phase of the Knights of Labor on which all the Catholic press and the non-Catholic religious press really did continually agree was their advocacy of temperance," wrote Henry J. Brown in The Catholic Church and the Knights of Labor (Washington, 1949), p. 286; also Joan Bland, Hibernian Crusade: The Story of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America (Washington, 1951), pp. 137, 144, and 169. If Powderly was generally friendly to those who labored in the common cause he did not care for the Pietistic Protestant Prohibitionist. Often they "were faddists, reformed drunkards, or people who regarded us, the workers, as a class to be patronized because we were poor." Powderly, The Path I Trod, p. 190.

[36] JKL, August 14, 1890.

Powderly's attacks on the saloon drew the support of American Catholics who agreed with his indictment of the institution and its effects on the working-class family. Archbishop John Ireland, a staunch foe of the saloon, applauded the efforts of Bishop John Watterson of Columbus, Ohio, to drive the saloon-keepers from all offices in Catholic associations.[37] The Bishop of Columbus withdrew his approval from any Catholic society which had as an officer "a liquor dealer or a saloon keeper." Priests in the diocese were instructed to refrain from granting absolution to any saloon owner who violated the law by Sunday sales, or in any other respect. Watterson's declaration against Catholics selling liquor was formally approved by Archbishop Francesco Satolli, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States.[38]

Archbishop Ireland, who initially endorsed the Anti-Saloon League, was as hostile to the saloon as Powderly himself. Commenting on the decision of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore (1884) which condemned intemperance for Catholics, Ireland wrote:

> The American saloon is responsible for the

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[37] New York Times, July 20, 1894.
[38] Ibid.

> awful intemperance which desolates the land and which is the physical and moral plague of our time...The saloon of to-day trades in and fattens upon intemperance, and all the dire evils which accompany or follow from intemperance are to be laid at its door.[39]

In appreciation of Powderly's long-standing efforts to promote the temperance ideal among workers, the Catholic Total Abstinence Union approved a resolution sustaining the aims and goals of the Knights of Labor at its 1891 convention, only two years before Powderly left the Order.[40]

Compliance

Between 1879 and 1886 the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor supported Powderly's efforts to insure the absolute exclusion of all saloon-keepers from the Order. At the convention of 1879 the Grand Master Workman set forth the procedures for the "retirement" of any member who decided to engage in the saloon business. He requested, and the General Assembly agreed, that members who engaged in the selling of liquors after their initiation to the Order, were to be issued "final cards," or honorable discharges from the Knights of Labor.[41] If, or when, the former member ceased to follow the occupation of seller of intoxicants he might rejoin the Order as a member in good standing, and in 1879 Powderly excluded the "respectable and honorable keepers of roadside inns" from the classification of saloon-keeper.[42]

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[39] Archbishop John Ireland, "The Catholic Chruch and the Saloon," North American Review, Vol. CLIX (1894), p. 501; Peter H. Odegard, Pressure Politics: The Story of the Anti-Saloon League (New York, 1966), pp. 24-29.

[40] Bland, Hibernian Crusade, p. 169.

A year later the GMW requested the delegates to the annual convention to approve a stricter enforcement of the exclusion of liquor dealers, or their agents, from the Knights of Labor, and the delegates complied. Moving to a more extreme classification of saloon-keeper, Powderly announced that any member whose wife sold liquor in any form was to be considered a saloon-keeper himself and was subject to expulsion.[43] As he boldly put it: "No person can be a member of the order whose wife sells liquor. He must either obtain a divorce from his wife or from this organization."[44] His unalterable insistance on this point later invited the criticism of some Catholic leaders, among them the Bishop of Montreal.[45]

The definition of "rumseller" was narrowed by the 1880 convention to include anyone who sold so much as a gill of liquor "either by himself, or by proxy," a definition so narrow that it was later cited as a precedent for the propriety of the Volstead Act. The officers of the local assemblies were called upon to investigate and expel any member suspected of selling liquor.[46] While some locals petitioned for exceptions to the exclusion rule, others rushed to Powderly's support. Local Assembly No. 1690 suggested that all members "Read more and drink less," and Local No. 708 advised fellow Knights of Labor to keep sober, exclude the saloon-keeper, and open reading rooms for the edification of other laborers.[47]

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[41] Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor, Chicago, 1879, pp. 146-147.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor, Pittsburgh, 1880, pp. 257-260.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Powderly, The Path I Trod, pp. 349-350.

At the special convention of the Knights of Labor in 1886, called to deal with the crisis of the national eight-hour day strike and violence on the railroads, Powderly suspended the regular order of business to receive a special delegation from the Woman's Christian Temperance Union headed by Mary A. Woodbridge, the first non-member to address a convention of the Order.[48] The GMW, who invited the delegation to attend, welcomed them as campaigners in a common battle. Mary Woodbridge presented a letter from Frances Willard expressing support for the Knights of Labor in their year of crisis, and inviting the Knights to send fraternal delegates to the approaching WCTU convention in October. The letter congratulated the Order on its support for the temperance ideal, and "the temperance principles of your chief," and asked the members to remain steadfast in their attachment to it. At the same time, the WCTU announced its support for cooperation, arbitration, and the solidarity of all working men.[49]

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[46] __Proceedings__, 1880, p. 259.

[47] __Proceedings__, 1882, p. 293.

[48] __Proceedings__ of the Special Session of the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor, Cleveland, 1886, p. 3.

Mary Woodbridge addressed the special session briefly on the temperance issue and praised Powderly for his unflagging enthusiasm in the promotion of sobriety. She described "Powderly's Pledge" as "words worthy of a Gough," and predicted that an organization of the stature of the Knights of Labor would move the world. We are, she told the delegates, "workers with you for the uplifting of humanity."[50] Despite the press of urgent business, Powderly felt that the temperance question merited foremost consideration. Thanking the WCTU representatives, he added: "...the same earnest desire animates both organizations to make mankind happier by bringing about a system of employment and living more in accord with the principles of justice, sobriety, and humanity."[51] He promised to use henceforth only men or women known for their temperate habits as organizers for the Order.

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[49] Ibid. The signers of the letter in addition to Frances Willard were Caroline Buell, L. M. N. Stevens, and Esther Pugh.

[50] Ibid., p. 4.

Powderly's warm reception to the delegation aroused the ire of some members who felt other matters of greater importance deserved first consideration. The dissident Knights, led by Delegate Donald of Iowa, sponsored a resolution condemning prohibition, but the challenged died when the committee on motions refused to consider it.[52] In response Powderly called for the proclmation of election day as a national holiday for labor, with every saloon in the nation closed for the day.[53]

Several months later, at the regular session of the General Assembly, Powderly ordered all alcoholic beverages banned from the social affairs of the Order. District Assembly No. 48 of Ohio proposed that: "all Assemblies or members of Assemblies giving balls, picnics or entertainments of any description, shall be prohibited from selling or deriving any pecuniary benefit from the sale of intoxicants of any kind at such entertainment."[54] The Committee on the State of the Order reported favorably on the resolution and Powderly called for strict adherence to it from the local assemblies. In 1887 Frances Willard was initiated into the Knights of Labor by Terence Powderly.[55] The national leader of the WCTU, he wrote, was "a moral force that was of great value to the cause in which the Knights of Labor were engaged."

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[51] Ibid., p. 60.

[52] Ibid., p. 41.

[53] Ibid., p. 42.

[54] Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor, Richmond, 1886, p. 210.

Concurrence

The temperance stance of the Knights of Labor cannot be explained solely as the result of Powderly's affection for the ideal of sobriety. The prohibition against saloonkeepers was adopted a year before Powderly was elected to head the Order. Other leaders of the Knights of Labor shared his cold-water views and worked with the GMW in what they saw as a common cause dedicated to the improve- of the material and moral life of the worker. Richard F. Trevellick, as a temperance advocate, was perhaps second only to Powderly in his denunciations of intemperance and the saloon.

Trevellick was born in England and trained as a ship carpenter.[56] After a wayward and exciting voyage he reached the United States and moved west to settle in Detroit. He joined the Detroit labor movement and was elected to the Detroit Trades Assembly.[57] Trevellick was attuned to the important social reform movements of the 1870s, including woman suffrage and especially temperance and labor reform. Unlike Powderly, Trevellick represented the Protestant-pietistic temperance groups within the Knights of Labor.[58]

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[55] Powderly, The Path I Trod, p. 389.

[56] Obadiah Hicks, Life of Richard F. Trevellick; Labor Orator, or the Harbinger of the Eight-Hour System (Joliet, Ill., 1896), passim.

He served as president of the National Labor Union from 1871 to 1873, and became deeply involved with the Greenback-Labor party in the late 1870s.[59] In 1880 he nominated General James B. Weaver for President on the Greenback ticket, and hoped to complete a fusion of the temperance forces and the monetary dissidents. Under Powderly he was appointed an organizer at large for the Knights of Labor.[60]

As a spokesman for the labor-temperance reformers, Trevellick worked with the state temperance leaders of Nebraska and openly endorsed state-wide prohibition. In 1889 the _Journal of United Labor_ published one of his attacks on the saloon and insobriety. "Grand and good as are the principles of the Knights of Labor," Trevellick noted, "the masses cannot be lifted up to adopt them and put them into law while the saloon is present to deaden every faculty that is good and spread poverty among the people."[61] He blamed the saloon for unemployment, hunger, and social legislation contrary to the best interests of the working classes. "It is the influences of the saloon," he added, "that has made this condition of misery possible."

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[57] _Ibid_., pp. 42-45.

[58] _Ibid_., p. 55.

[59] Ware, _The Labor Movement in the United States_, pp. 3, 10, 14, and 50.

[60] _Ibid_., p. 3.

In 1890 Trevellick joined the Populist crusade as an adovcate of the fusion of toilers and tillers to create one national reform party. In addition to his endorsement of monetary reform, government ownership of the railroads, a graduated income tax, and the free ballot for both sexes, he urged that "Liquor selling [be] prohibited by law."[62]

Ralph Beaumont, the first Grand Worthy Foreman of the Knights of Labor, was a temperance co-worker with Powderly and Trevellick. Writing in 1889 he reminded working men that when he had no labor ticket to vote for he always voted the Prohibition party ticket, but never the Republican or Democratic tickets.[63] Beaumont was a former leader of the Knights of St. Crispin, where he was trained in the doctrines of the self-reliant artisan. "I have never found the Prohibition party in the way of the reforms I have advocated," Beaumont wrote. "...I can now as I have done for years, support the measures they propose as the remedy for the abolition of poverty caused by the liquor traffic...."[64]

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[61] JUL, September, 19, 1889.
[62] Hicks, Life of Richard Trevellick, pp. 141-142.
[63] JUL, October 10, 1889.

As a prohibitionist, at least by instinct, Beaumont was in favor of the abolition of the manufacture and sale of all alcoholic beverages. His reasoning, anticipating Progressive arguments for a national prohibition law, rested on a positive view of the powers of the State. Since it was the duty of the State to protect the health and safety of its citizens, it was the obligation of the political authorities to halt the sale of intoxicating beverages, for they benafitted no one except the seller. It was "the duty of the State to protect the unfortunate from the greed of his appetite by placing the liquor traffic beyond his reach...," Beaumont argued.[65]

In the struggle to limit the traffic in alcoholic beverages, the Prohibitionists in Kansas under the leadership of John St. John served as a particularly important example for Beaumont. He was impressed with the fusion of Populist-labor objectives with temperance reform. The Kansas prohibitionists, in his estimation, had "gone further than even some of our labor parties, inasmuch as they demand that the government should at once seize the railroads and telegraphs under the right of eminent domain."[66] He also singled out the prohibition parties in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Maryland as worthy of the support of the working man.

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[64] *Ibid.*

[65] *Ibid.*

In 1889 the national newspaper of the Knights of Labor officially endorsed the passage of state-wide prohibition statutes and called upon all workers to join the movement to abolish the saloon. "Wherever prohibition has been given a trial, sustained by public sentiment and enforced by honest officials, there has been a marked improvement in the condition of the people," the Journal of United Labor announced.[67] Excoriating drunkenness as a "crime", the paper urged all workers to cast their ballots against the saloon in state referenda on the issue. Remember, the reader was cautioned, that "No man ever became a better Knight or any Knight a better man by putting into his stomach the stuff which fires the brain and drives the manhood from the man."[68] While it was true that low wages and exhausting labor forced the worker to seek escape in the saloon, it was still the obligation of the State to protect the individual from what experience found to be harmful or injurious. "If the appetite can be controlled in no other way we would make it impossible for them to get the stuff with which to satisfy it."[69] Labor reform would succeed only when it was supported by "clear brains and pure water."

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[66] Ibid.
[67] JUL, April 11, 1889.
[68] Ibid.

Expanding on its view of state prohibition a year later, the journal rejected any argument that the liquor interests ought to be compensated for losses resulting from the passage of prohibition or local option laws. The liquor dealers had no more claim to compensation than had the slave owners of the Old South. "If there is to be any compensation it is the enslaved and despoiled masses who are entitled to it," the paper stated.[70] The alliance between the saloon-keeper and the political boss was blamed for the failure of legislatures to enact reforms favored by the working classes. "Clean out the saloon," wrote the Rev. Neuburgh of New York, "and we shall clean out the legislative halls. Then we can look for just legislation on our social issues."[71]

In the first weeks of the approaching depression of 1893, the Journal of the Knights of Labor urged the nationalization of the liquor industry, a plan espoused by some midwestern Populists and the socialists.[72] State ownership of retail liquor outlets had two desirable advantages. First, the social institution of the saloon would be abolished forever. Second, the elimination of the saloon meant an end to the well-organized political machine which worked against just labor legislation and in favor of special interest groups led by capitalists and selfish politicians. The journal even speculated that the nationalization of the liquor traffic might form a basis for the unification of prohibition and labor reform groups.

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[69] Ibid.
[70] JUL, June 19, 1890.
[71] JKL, September 3, 1891.

John Swinton, the publisher and editor of his own labor reform newspaper, endorsed Powderly's defense of temperance for working men and offered liberal coverage to advocates of the movement as long as he published his journal. In particular, John Swinton's Paper reprinted many of the temperance addresses to workers by Wendell Phillips. In 1870 Phillips urged the working men of Boston to repudiate both the established parties and vote with the prohibitionists and the labor reformers. "Temperance and protection to labor," he proclaimed, "were the only issues now presented that had a semblance to life."[73] Five years later, addressing the delegates of the Prohibition Party of Massachusetts in Boston, he noted that: "The older I grow the deeper I am impressed with the importance of the temperance movement in civil affairs in the republic."[74]

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[72] JKL, January 19, 1893.

[73] New York Times, November 4, 1870.

In 1884 John Swinton reprinted Wendell Phillips's 1872 speech to the Knights of St. Crispin in Boston. Every reader, wrote Swinton, will "see how it glows with truth."[75] In the speech Phillips attacked the industrial system which forced workers into the saloon, but he also criticized workers for their lack of self control and resulting intemperance:

> I believe in the temperance movement; I am a temperance man of nearly forty years' standing, and I think it one of the grandest things in the world, because it holds the basis of self control. Intemperance is the cause of poverty, I know, but there is another side to that; poverty is the cause of intemperance. Crowd a man with fourteen hours' work a day and you crowd him down to a mere animal life. You have eclipsed his aspirations, dulled his tastes, stunted his intellect, and made him a mere tool to work fourteen hours and catch a thought in the interval....the operative, after he had worked fourteen hours, had nothing to look forward to but his grog.[76]

Phillips defended the Maine Law as a powerful guardian of republican government and described intemperance as

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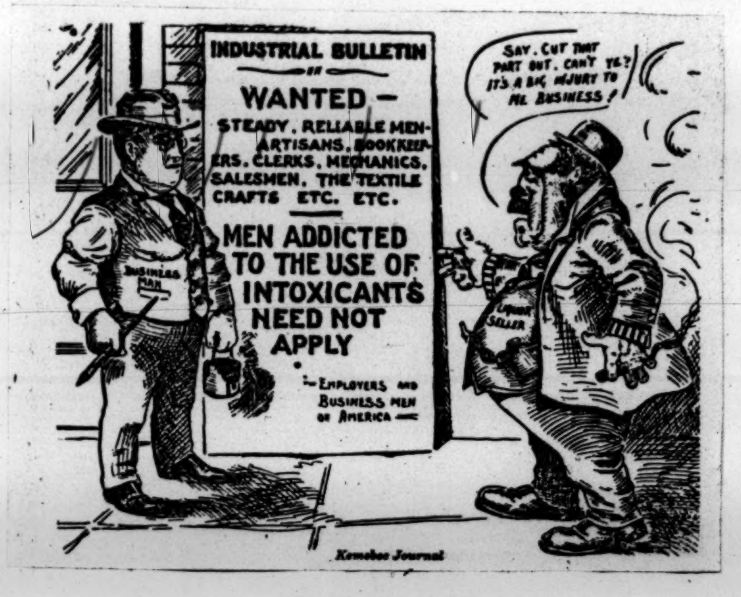
[74] New York Times, October 7, 1875.

[75] John Swinton's Paper, February 10, 1884.

[76] Ibid.


INDUSTRIAL BULLETIN
WANTED —
STEADY, RELIABLE MEN — ARTISANS, BOOKKEEPERS, CLERKS, MECHANICS, SALESMEN, THE TEXTILE CRAFTS ETC. ETC.
MEN ADDICTED TO THE USE OF INTOXICANTS NEED NOT APPLY
— EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESS MEN OF AMERICA —
BUSINESS MAN
SAY, CUT THAT PART OUT, CAN'T YE? IT'S A BIG INJURY TO ME BUSINESS!
LIQUOR SELLER

Kennebec Journal

(**THE UNION SIGNAL**)

as the great destroyer of "all public virtue."[77]

While the Knights of Labor, sustained by friendly allies, urged the recognition of the temperance ideal among its members, older unions of skilled craftsmen, many of whom later affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, pursued their own temperance endeavors. One such union was the National Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, organized in 1875. Article 8, Section 2, of the union's constitution stated that "habitual intoxication shall be sufficient cause for expulsion."[78] Despite a general resolve not to admit known drunkards, in 1884 a marine engineer named Thomas Dempsey was admitted to the union even though "he was known as a drinking man."

Union Local No. 42 of Jacksonville, Florida, encouraged the new member to give up his intemperate habits and "to keep straight." Within a short time, however, Dempsey went back to his old ways and was scalded in an accident while intoxicated on the job. He lost his position and "was seen lying on the walk in a dirty and beastly condition by one of our men," wrote John Eining, president of the local, "and taken out of sight and talked to."[79] Einig secured Dempsey another job but the result was the same:

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[77] Wendell Phillips, Speeches, Lectures and Letters, Second Series, (Boston, 1905), pp. 179-180.

[78] Journal of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association, 1885, p. 46.

[79] Ibid., p. 44.

> Five days after Dempsey took charge he salted and burned the boiler, and the owner of the boat reported him a drunken 'sot,' and said he wanted no more men out of our Association. He was discharged and came back worse than before. He again got a position and took his clothes and started for the boat, so drunk that he fell on the gang plank and would have rolled overboard had not some one saved him.[80]

Giving up completely on Dempsey, a member filed charges of intoxication against him and requested that he be disciplined by the union.

A committee, composed of members of Local No. 42, reviewed the charges against the engineer, and Dempsey was found guilty and suspended for six months. When several members protested Einig's suspension order, national president Andrew Ritter upheld the punishment. In a letter to Einig, he wrote: "The sentence given him I must say was very light, as drunkenness is a disgrace to the organization and to the engineering fraternity, in fact is a disgrace to any body of men."[81] The good reputation of the marine engineers was too important "to allow themselves to associate with a man that is the habit of getting drunk."

The shunning of the saloon-keeper and the drunkard became so identified with the Order of the Knights of Labor that similar attitudes enforced by the craft unions were ignored. By the last decade of the nineteenth century the antagonism shown by Powderly to the saloon had so diffused that few national labor leaders dared regret its legal demise in the Prohibition Era.

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[80] Ibid., pp. 44-45.
[81] Ibid., p. 46.

Within the Knights of Labor opposition to Powderly's leadership resulted in his removal from office in 1893. His temperance views were so unpopular with the brewers, and allied unions, that in New York City they broke away from the Order after 1887.[82] The final dissolution of the Knights of Labor, however, can not be laid at the doorstep of Powderly the temperance reformer. The fervor of reform unionism had spent itself. Powderly's temperance views extended beyond the simple approach of moral suasion, for he was willing to use the power of his office and the disciplinary procedures of the Order to advance his cold-water principles at the expense of the personal liberties of those who did not share his view of the temperance question. He was not a prohibitionist, as some historians have claimed, in the sense that he envisioned state or national legislation to halt the manufacture and consumption of intoxicants.[83] He consistently advocated the internal exercise of power by voluntaristic associations to discipline and reform the character of their members, a view accepted by later prohibitionists as short-sighted and ineffective.

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[82] Ware, *The Labor Movement in the United States*, p. 223.

[83] Thomas C. Cochran, *The Pabst Brewing Company* (New

In 1915 the *Journal of the Knights of Labor* admitted that prohibition was still a "great cause," but expressed a sorrowful indignation with the "undemocratic" methods used by the Anti-Saloon League and its lobbyists.[84] Prohibition, as the League intended it, would confiscate the property of "one of the greatest industries maintained in this country," with the resulting loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in tax revenues.[85] The journal could no longer support such a movement in good faith. But during the years of Powderly's leadership the Order was willing to work with prohibitionists and out of that willingness developed the seemly alliance between the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Knights of Labor.

York, 1948), p. 283. Cochran quite erroneously labels Powderly a prohibitionist: "Terence Powderly, the Grand Master Workman of the Knights, was an ardent Prohibitionist, and, under his persuasion, the Knights adopted a temperance clause in their consitution. This action was certainaly not calculated to appeal to the brewery workers." *Ibid*.

[84] *JKL*, January, 1915.

[85] *JKL*, January, 1917.

CHAPTER VI

WHITE RIBBONS AND ELBOW-GREASE

The National Woman's Christian Temperance Union was organized in November, 1874, in Cleveland, Ohio, by middle-class feminist reformers who envisaged a new and militant prohibitionist society exclusively for women.[1] In spirit and structure it was allied with the traditional temperance churches--Methodist, Baptist, and Congregationalist--and with the woman's suffrage movement. The philosophy of the WCTU, despite its name, was the promotion of a "dry" America either by state or national statute. As Mrs. L. B. Barrett explained to Senator Henry W. Blair of New Hampshire in 1883: "The Woman's Christian Temperance Union is in favor of a prohibitory law. I hardly think our women would be ready to do for a license law what they are doing for prohibition."[2] The WCTU was an influential educational organization and an efficient lobbyist for the prohibition cause. Under an aggressive national leadership, local divisions were established with the aid of friendly churches, and feminist reformism was mobilized to change American drinking habits.[3]

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[1] Norton Mezvinsky, "The White-Ribbon Reform, 1874-1920," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1959), pp. 62-65; Joseph R. Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana, 1963), pp. 88-98; Ross Evans Paulson, *Women's Suffrage and Prohibition: A Comparative Study of Equality and Social Control* (Glenview, Ill., 1973), pp. 113-118; and Andrew Sinclair, *The Emancipation of the American Woman* (New York, 1966), pp. 222-229.

[2] *Relations Between Capital and Labor*, III, p. 634.

While the WCTU relied on the support of local church memberships for financial and moral support, it did not confine its efforts solely to reassuring the true-believers. Early in the history of the organization its leaders realized that it was imperative to build support for a prohibition movement outside of the churches and sympathetic rural areas.. They saw that if prohibition were to succeed it must have the favor of the urban working classes, and the only way to gain that favor was to show their understanding for the problems of the laboring man and to work for a solution to those problems in common harmony with labor leaders and reformers. The WCTU, therefore, elected to establish its national headquarters in the Chicago suburb of Evanston and not, as the Anti-Saloon League did, in a small town in rural America. The popular president of the WCTU, Miss Frances E. Willard, moved easily among the urban residents of America and knew the misery of the industrial city as only a direct and careful observer could know it.

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[3] Frances Willard defined the structure of the WCTU in almost militaristic terms:. "The local union is a miniature of the national, having similar officiary and plan of work. It is a military company carefully mustered, officered, and drilled. The county union is but an aggregation of the local, and the districts of the counties, while each State is a regiment, and the national itself is womanhood's Grand Army of the Home." As quoted in Anna A. Gordon, The Beautiful Life of Frances E. Willard (Chicago, 1898), p. 159.

Because the WCTU saw the temperance crusade as a movement drawing support from all classes in America, it created a broadly-based program of reform under the leadership of Miss Willard which included the important demands of organized labor. To solicit and maintain the understanding of working men the WCTU established a number of special departments within the national and state structures to study the social conditions of the industrial worker, his problems, and to promote social and economic reforms. Several of those departments worked directly in the field promoting temperance and sobriety among workers, while other departments gathered information and statistics to be used in securing legislation desired by the working classes. At the same time the national organization sought to make its members aware of the problems of poverty and the plight of the industrial worker.

Prayer and Persuasion

Under the influential leadership of Miss Willard prohibition was linked to the larger movement for the elevation of the poor and the social advancement of the downtrodden. In 1892 she wrote that "the Temperance Army, the Labor Army, and Woman's Suffrage Army must 'unite or die'" in the common struggle for the reform of American society.[4] To that collection of forces she might well have added, as she often did, the army of prohibitionists. The WCTU, she explained, "stands as the strongest bulwark of Prohibition, State and national, by constitutional amendment and by statute."[5] The national Department of Temperance and Labor was organized to secure the votes of "the great army of wage workers" for the prohibition movement.[6] The WCTU worked to convert the worker to the prohibition cause by lectures and meetings, pamphlets and newspapers, and special temperance evangelists. It also worked directly with the presidents and officers of corporations to require strong company rules against intoxication both on and off the job.

The WCTU, with the tactful guidance of its president, made specific overtures to working men and their families on behalf of strict sobriety. The organization also developed close ties with the Knights of Labor to encourage its policy of expelling saloon-keepers and intemperate members. Since the emergence of the Knights of Labor the Bible had become "a marvelous text-book of political economy."[7] I believe, Miss Willard told the delegates to the 1887 national convention, that:

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[4] Minutes of the National Woman's Christian Temper-Union, 1892, p. 124. Hereafter cited as: Minutes, NWCTU.

[5] Willard, "Work of the W.C.T.U.," Woman's Work in America, p. 402.

[6] The Union Signal (Evanston), November 28, 1912.

> we should have some kind words for a movement that is revolutionizing the outlook of our brothers and sisters who are wage-workers, and through which temperance and the elevation of women are making such progress as seems well-nigh magical.[8]

She praised the Order for its stand in favor of woman suffrage, equal wages for women, the eight-hour day, and arbitration of industrial disputes.

The practical work of the WCTU among the working classes was directed primarily towards the railroad workers, miners, and loggers. There were specific reasons for devoting special attention to those groups of laborers. Temperance reform was already well-developed within the ranks of rail workers, and the rail brotherhoods furnished a strong basis on which to build greater temperance enthusiasm. The loggers, like the merchant seamen, were exploited by hiring agents, housed in filthy camps, and subject to long winters which encouraged lengthy bouts of intoxication. As for the miners, there was the concern for the poverty of the mining towns and the ever-

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[7] *Minutes*, NWCTU, 1887, p. pp. 91-92.
[8] *Ibid*.

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present threat of industrial accidents. Special departments were created at the national level of the WCTU to carry the message of temperance directly to those workers after 1879. Numerous other organizations and societies were established over the years, some of which touched the lives of the workers or their children. The Loyal Legion, Cadets of Temperance, Kitchen Garden societies, and the Blue Ribbon societies, among others, furthered the prohibition goals of the WCTU.[9]

The national departments for work among the miners, loggers, and railway workers were led by superintendents who prepared temperance tracts, scheduled meetings and speakers, and petitioned employers to stress the need for sobriety. Companies were urged to require a temperance pledge of their employees, or to substitute Monday for Saturday when paying their workers. The white-ribbon reformers, explained the head of Boston's WCTU, have "endeavored to influence manufacturers to require the total abstinence of their employés and that is becoming more and more an object."[10] The symbol of the WCTU's dedication to the struggle for sobriety was the small white ribbon worn by its members.

Representatives of the state and national organiza-

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[9] __Relations Between Capital and Labor__, II, pp. 1260-1262.

[10] __Ibid__., III, p. 645.

tions of the WCTU were invited by Senator Blair of New Hampshire, the chairman of the Senate Committee upon the Relations between Labor and Capital, to explain their campaigns for the elevation of the working classes. Blair admired their work and listened carefully as they described their efforts in Massachusetss and New York. He agreed with them that the temperance movement was an important facet of labor reform, and he was even willing to entertain arguments on behalf of a prohibition law. "The labor question, you see," he noted in the committee hearings held in Boston, "is a very large question involving temperance work and everything else that goes to the reformation and improvement of the physical, mental, and moral state of society."[11] While the time was not ripe for a prohibition law, he admitted, "I think in twenty years something of the kind might go through...."[12] While American society moved slowly towards an experiment in Prohibition, middle-class women in high collars and white cuffs concentrated their efforts on winning the struggle for sobriety by persuading large segments of the working class to abstain from all intoxicating beverages.

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 654.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 664. Blair actually drafted a prohibition amendment which he submitted in 1876. But the effort, and subsequent efforts in the 1880s, proved futile.

The Railroad Workers

In 1880 the WCTU initiated a plan to persuade the railroads and steamship companies to require a total abstinence pledge of all their employees. The campaign of 1880 called upon company officials to conduct anti-treating meetings and to provide coffee at suitable times for their workers.[13] In Indiana the Railroad Christian Association cooperated with the rail companies to implement temperance rules.[14] Many of the railroads adopted company rules by 1880 patterned on the strictures against insobriety established earlier by the brotherhoods.[15] Commissioner Wright estimated that over half of all the nation's railroads "prohibit the use of intoxicating liquors on the roads under their control" at the end of the decade.[16] Almost all of the companies discharged employees for habitual drunkenness, or excessive drinking.

In 1878 the national convention of the WCTU criticized the railroads for serving wines and liquors on the

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[13] *Minutes*, NWCTU, 1880, pp. 65-66.

[14] *Ibid*.

[15] Edwin Clyde Robbins, *Railway Conductors: A Study in Organized Labor* (New York, 1914), p. 20.

[16] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Fifth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Labor*, 1889 (Washington, 1890), p. 21.

Pullman Palace cars and urged them to substitute non-alcoholic beverages instead.[17] This, the delegates were informed, set a very bad example for the railway workers. The department in charge of temperance work among the rail employees stressed the importance of sobriety to the prevention of industrial accidents. "It is impossible," the declaration of 1880 stated, "for the brain tainted with alcohol to possess the clear judgement and command of all faculties which are necessary in the performance of any duty."[18]

A year later members of the WCTU were informed of the promising success of their temperance campaign. According to the national superintendent: "...a large number of railroad companies are recognizing the fact that persons addicted to the use of intoxicating liquors are unfit for positions of trust, and order that no man who drinks shall be employed either as a station agent or in train service."[19] The temperance efforts of the national body found a sympathetic friend in the corporate person of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

J. W. Garrett, president of the B and O, invited the WCTU to concentrate its work among the employees of the company-owned lines.[20] In Baltimore the local chapter

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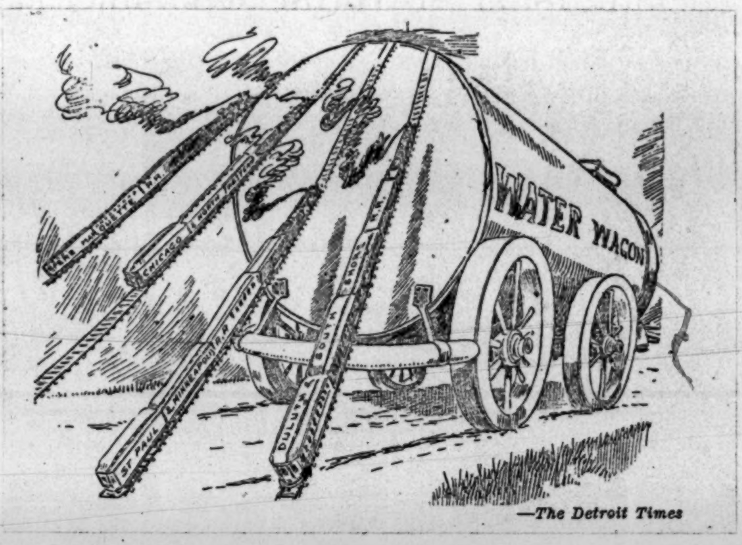
[17] *Minutes*, NWCTU, 1878, p. 41.

[18] *Minutes*, NWCTU, 1880, pp. 65-66.

[19] *Minutes*, NWCTU, 1881, pp. CXXII-III (Appendix).

[20] *Minutes*, NWCTU, 1882, pp. LVIII-LXI.


WATER WAGON
CHICAGO
ST PAUL
DULUTH & SOUTH SHORE R.R.

—The Detroit Times

(__The Union Signal__)

prepared a special drive to carry the message to B and O employees living or working in the city. Visitation committees toured the yards and the nearby boarding houses to distribute temperance tracts and hold special lectures. Special noon-time temperance talks were held in the railroad's Bailey Round House for the workers in the freight yards.[21] The results of the first meetings encouraged other local chapters in neighboring states, and particularly in West Virginia, to follow Baltimore's example. In cooperation with the WCTU, Garrett of the Baltimore and Ohio prohibited the sale of intoxicants in all stations and hotels owned by the company.

One of the representatives of the WCTU active in railroad temperance work, Jennie Smith, known as the "railroad evangelist," was given free transportation on the B and O's lines to carry her message from town to town. Through the efforts of such dedicated workers as Miss Smith, Frances Willard noted in 1882, over twelve hundred workers had been converted to the temperance movement and there were thirteen active WCTU railroad groups.[22] In 1883 the railway campaign was extended to eight states and over three hundred meetings were held.[23] Miss Willard praised the friendly cooperation of the

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Minutes, NWCTU, 1883, pp. LX-LXI.

Baltimore and Ohio, the Pennsylvania, and the Cumberland and Pennsylvania railroads in her testimony before the Blair committee in 1883. Thanks to the WCTU, and the companies, anyone could now hear "Moody and Sankey hymns" along the tracks of the B and O.[24]

Within a few years WCTU-sponsored temperance meetings were held as far West as Kansas and Missouri, and from Georgia to Louisiana in the South, in railroad round houses and station depots. Hundreds of thousands of pages were printed at WCTU expense urging all rail workers to remain strictly sober in their habits, for their own welfare and the safety of their passengers. The national convention in 1885 recommended a greater effort to carry the doctrine of temperance to "all classes of society," including firemen, street-car workers, printers, and newsboys. The WCTU also requested permission from friendly railroads to place temperance literature in the caboose cars for workers to read in their free moments.[25]

The conern with the well-being of the railway worker naturally drew the attention of the WCTU to the great rail strikes of the 1880s and 1890s. In 1894 the national superintendent for railroad temperance work, Mrs. C. M. Woodward of Seward, Nebraska, took special note of the strike at the Pullman Palace Car Works just outside of Chicago. "Never has the tact, patience and devotion of workers been more tested than during the present year. During the dark days of the strike we shared to an unusual degree the great and general anxiety as to the outcome," she reported to the members.[26] The WCTU felt a spontaneous sympathy for the workers and "their families, for whom so costly an effort has been made and whose physical and spiritual welfare has been the cause of much solicitude."[27]

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[24] Relations Between Labor and Capital, II, p. 1228.

[25] Minutes, NWCTU, 1885, p. LXXXVIII; Minutes, NWCTU, 1886, p. LXXX.

Miss Willard, in her annual report to the convention of the national organization, urged the delegates to support the "demands of the railway employees for arbitration of differences between the corporation and the employee...so far as our influence obtains."[28] The present outlook for industrial unrest on the railroads, she added, gives a new emphasis "to the importance of work among railroad employees."

The Union Signal, the national publication of the WCTU, blamed the violence at Pullman "on the work of the irresponsible mob element always present in time of disorder" and not on the honest workmen who were forced to strike by the intractable policies of George Pullman. The American Railway Union, organized by Gene Debs, was praised for advising against needless violence and its obvious concern for the elevation of the worker. In Bakersfield, California, rail workers went out on strike in sympathy with the Pullman workers, with the approval of the White-Ribbons reformers.[29] Destitute families were supplied with food and clothing, and sick workers were offered special care.

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[26] Minutes, NWCTU, 1894, p. 427.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., p. 146.

The WCTU lent its support to the "white button" movement of Lorenzo Coffin in the form of volunteer workers and the distribution of temperance literature.[30] In 1894 a number of state superintendents reported the distribution of white buttons and RRTA pledge cards. Jennie Smith reported that she distributed over one thousand buttons and pledge cards during the year. The state superintendent from Idaho noted that she found "Quite a demand for the white button by abstaining employés" during the year.[31] In Illinois large numbers of railroad men were seen wearing the white button, according to Martha C. Collins of Vandalia.[32] Similar reports of success for the movement came from Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon, New Hampshire, and

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[29] Ibid., p. 429.

[30] Ibid., p. 430.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., p. 431.

Pennsylvania. The major rail systems converging on Chicago--the Burlington, Wabash, Illinois Central, Santa Fe, Chicago and Northwestern, and the Union Pacific--were circularized and cajoled by both white-button and white-ribbon reformers to adopt strong temperance rules for their workers.[33]

In 1912 the department of railroad temperance work reviewed its accomplishments of the last thirty years with a sense of satisfaction. The Union Signal found that almost all of the large railroads were staunch supporters of employee sobriety. Again, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad took the lead. In 1908 the company issued an order that no officer or worker on the line would be permitted to retain his position if found imbibing "either while on duty or off duty."[34] "Under no circumstances," the order added, "will exceptions be made." Perhaps more typical of the company temperance rule was Rule No. 8 of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad which stated: "Drinking when on duty or frequenting saloons will not be tolerated...."[35]

In general there was little conflict between company officials and workers over such rigid regulation of their personal habits as company temperance policies required. Indeed, it was the rail workers themselves, through the brotherhoods, who took the lead in promoting sobriety and temperate behavior. Nor were there popular protests over outside pressure, such as that from the WCTU, for greater attention to the problem of insobriety. Workers and companies were in general accord on the priniciple that modern rail transportation required sober and competent workmen.

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[33] Ibid., p. 430.
[34] The Union Signal, September 5, 1912.
[35] Ibid.

The Miners

The promotion of temperance among miners by the WCTU followed the successful pattern perfected by the national department of railroad temperance work. The national department for temperance work among the miners was organized in 1889 and Winnie F. English of Quincy, Illinois, was named the first superintendent. In 1894 she noted that her department had from the first one of the most difficult tasks given to any agency of the WCTU.[36] The company-controlled mining town was almost immune to outside reform leadership, and in most of the small mining towns there were few churches on which to build a base of strength. Having observed the oppressive conditions in many of the mining towns, Miss English urged the nation's miners to turn to political reform to end the abuses of socially irresponsible company policies. The miners, she wrote, "hold in their power that most potent of all arguments in social government, the ballot, which, if rightly executed, would speedily bring about an adjustment of differences."[37] Under the leadership of its national superintendent, the department concentrated its temperance efforts in the coal states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana, and Illinois, and in the metal states of Colorado, Nevada, California, and Wyoming.[38]

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[36] *Minutes*, 1894, p. 277.

The WCTU was particularly active in the Pennsylvania coal communities, where its efforts were supported by a strong state organization. In Martindale, Pennsylvania, members of the WCTU joined forces with a strong anti-saloon faction led by John C. Martin to close down five of the six saloons in the mining town.[39] Martin, who announced that he was determined "to clear out the whole lot," estimated that many of the miners spent half of their wages in the saloons, to the further depravation of their wives and children.

The WCTU printed special temperance tracts for the miners, including some in Chinese for distribution in the

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[37] Ibid., p. 277.
[38] Ibid., p. 278.
[39] Ibid.

"gold ring" mines of the West Coast, which were sent along with Bibles to such mining communities as Coeur d'Alene and Cripple Creek, Colorado.[40] In Illinois the candidate for governor on the Prohibition ticket, Mrs. Clara Hoffman, toured the coal mining towns with a WCTU delegation to garner the votes of the miners.[41]

Miss English, who exhibited a constant sympathy for the miners, called upon all miners to join with reformers to secure the passage of mine safety laws and the modification of company rules setting wage rates. The strikes, lock-outs, and lay-offs in the coal mines during the 1890s led her to urge greater political support for the miners' grievances by the WCTU. "Better that rich corporations should lose heavily on their present contracts," she wrote, "than that the lives of men, women, and little children, who at best have a pitifully meager living, should go out in hunger and want."[42] "Is it not pitiful," she continued, "in this land of plenty that the honest toiler should have to resort to severe methods, which bring suffering to the loved ones in their homes/sic/ to get a fair wage for their labor?"[43] The companies and the consumers must be willing to pay more so that the miner might be paid a just wage.

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[40] Minutes, NWCTU, 1896, p. 325.
[41] Ibid., p. 328.
[42] Minutes, NWCTU, 1897, p. 419.
[43] Ibid.

In order to strengthen the temperance work among the miners Miss English recommended the establishment of night schools for boys who worked in the tipples and day schools for girls where scientific temperance lessons and other practical courses might be offered. In Pennsylvania several pilot schools were opened and operated in 1895 with the aid and direction of the WCTU, although none the schools lasted long.[44]

The Loggers

The WCTU's department for temperance work among the men of the lumber camps was organized in 1883 and was inspired by the work of W. F. Davis, a temperance missionary preacher in Upper Michigan.[45] A former New Englander from Chelsea, Massachusetts, Davis travelled from lumber camp to lumber camp preaching temperance sermons and leaving literature behind for the loggers to read during the long winter months when the saloon became the major social attraction. In the lumber regions, as in the mining towns, the saloon followed the worker. A camp foreman from Pembina, Wisconsin, wrote that the "saloon-keeper will follow us into the wood and establish his hell shop with[In] a mile or so of our camp."[46] Following the example of

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[44] __Minutes__, 1896, p. 327.
[45] __Minutes__, 1885, pp. LXV-LXVI.
[46] __Minutes__, 1894, p. 285.

Davis, the "temperance preacher in the wilderness," volunteers were recruited by the WCTU to visit the lumber camps on behalf of the cause of sobriety.

In Wisconsin over two hundred logging camps were supplied with temperance literature, and in that state one-half of the expenses of the itinerant temperance workers was paid by the lumber companies.[47] The railroads contributed to the WCTU's efforts by providing free passes for the temperance missionaries.

In New Hampshire the WCTU published The Voice From the Woods, a monthly newspaper reporting the social conditions in the camps. Workers reportedly travelled over 3,000 miles in 1893 and visited two hundred lumber sites.[48] Newspapers, comfort bags containing soap, needles, and thread, and books were distributed to the loggers and their families. Also some thirty libraries, containing mostly temperance literature, were established to encourage a greater interest in the temperance movement. Since many of the loggers were Catholics, Archbishop Ireland's attacks on intemperance and the saloon were translated into French, German, and even Swedish, for distribution to the lumber workers.[49]

In New England the WCTU was aided by the Christian

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[47] *Ibid.*, p. 282.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *Ibid.*

Endeavor Societies which contributed books and newspapers to be delivered by the temperance workers. Among the loggers, perhaps more than among the miners or railroad workers, the temperance crusade became a missionary movement, with theology and temperance finely intertwined. "No better home mission field, or foreign either, exists than among the loggers who live so many months away from civilized folks, in the midst of so much to lead us into evil," wrote a state WCTU worker in 1894.[50] While the back woods appeared to some like a foreign country, the efforts of the WCTU did not go unnoticed by the large lumber companies. The Lumber Trade Journal of Chicago remarked "that to one who has paid but little attention to the subject, the lumber camp work of the W.C.T.U. was a revelation...."[51] The white-ribbon reformers, the trade journal added, "were carrying on a great and good work."

The day-to-day temperance and charitable work of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union was extensive and, in the estimation of its supporters, successful. Contacts on a personal level with the working men of America, through the special departments for temperance work, led to a greater sympathy for the problems of the laboring poor. At first, as Mae Whitman admitted, the WCTU was mainly concerned with securing the votes of the army of wage-workers for prohibitory legislation. But as state and national officers moved into the mines and logging camps their feelings changed into genuine sympathy for the workers and their families. "...as we came closer in touch," she wrote, "with the great body of workers, we ceased to consider it as a hugh piece of machinery to be set in motion for our special benefit," and "we caught a new vision of our opportunities and responsibilities toward these toilers."[52] Out of an indistinct and struggling industrial population emerged the human forms of honest and hard-working laborers pressing against conditions imposed by a corporate economy. "We must now look upon them as our brothers and sisters," Mae Whitman told the national WCTU.

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., p. 281.

The belief that men and women mattered more than wealth, that temperance reform could not be accomplished without social reform, set the WCTU apart from the general prohibition lobby as early as the middle of the 1880s. In 1885 the national convention of the white-ribboners affirmed its conviction that "The most precious product of this country is not gold, nor silver, nor iron, nor lumber, nor salt, but men and women."[53]

Like the Populists, the white-ribbon reformers under the leadership of Miss Willard believed that political

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[52] The Union Signal, November 28, 1912.
[53] Minutes, 1885, pp. LXIII-LXVII.

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power was the key to the ultimate restructuring of American society. But the political system of the Gilded Age was corrupt, distorted by an alliance between the urban political machine, the saloon, and the spokesmen for social and economic repression. Before the forces of social reform could come together with a chance for success, the political system must be purged and purified. "Politics," said one WCTU member, "one of the mightiest agencies, has for ages been pressed into the service of the Spirit of Evil; but politics shall be redeemed and taken from the hands of the prince of this world and given into the hands of our Lord...."[54] Not until the political system was reformed and the people realized that "His moral laws are of supreme authority in civil affairs" would social progress triumph.

Beginning in 1880 the WCTU lent its efforts to numerous social reform movements, including woman suffrage, the eight hour day, "pensions for mothers, according to their needs," equal pay for women, mine and factory inspection laws, reform of the political party systems, and abolition of the liquor traffic. The focus of the thrust into social and economic reform was Frances E. Willard, president of the WCTU from 1879 to 1898.

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[54] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

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A "Most Dangerous Person"

The suffrage reformer, Matilda Gage, wrote Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in a spirit of both trepidation and praise, that "Frances Willard, with her magnetic force, her power of leadership, her desire to introduce religious tenets into the government, is the most dangerous person on the American continent today."[55] Frances E. Willard was born into a family with a distinguished New England tradition, one which included two presidents of Harvard College and a pastor of Boston's Old South Church.[56] Her parents were teachers who moved from New York to Janesville, Wisconsin. Miss Willard grew up in a family shaped by abolitionist sympathies and a compelling respect for education. In 1857 she attended the Milwaukee Female College, where her aunt was a professor of history, and a year later she transferred to the Northwestern Female College in Evanston, Illinois.[57] After serving as Dean of Women and professor of aesthetics, she was elected president of the national WCTU in 1879.

"She learned to read from *The Slave's Friend*," one of her most dedicated biographers wrote, "thus early imbibing from her abolition parents the sentiments that swept through her soul in her succeeding years...."[58] The English temperance reformer and Fabian socialist, Lady Henry Somerset, described Miss Willard as a woman who preached "the liberation of the oppressed, the destruction of legalized wrong."[59] When Frances Willard was elected president of the WCTU in 1879, the organization was little more than a floating collection of state and local groups lobbying for state prohibition statutes and closing saloons with prayer-meetings and parades. From a single-issue movement, the WCTU moved rapidly under her inspiration to deal with the larger issues of dependence and social change.

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[55] As quoted in Alma Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (New York, 1940), p. 275.

[56] Anna A. Gordon, *The Beautiful Life of Frances E. Willard* (Chicago, 1898), pp. 17-21.

[57] *Ibid*., pp. 54-66.

In 1895 she recalled that early in the temperance movement supporters were so preoccupied with the goal of sobriety that they overlooked "the mighty power of poverty to induce evil habits of every kind."[60] This failure led many reformers to believe that the passage of a prohibition law would solve the problems of public morality, poverty, and disease. For her the social question was far more

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[58] Ibid., p. 32.

[59] Ibid., p. 15.

[60] Mary Earhart, Frances Willard: From Prayers to Politics (Chicago, 1944), p. 257.

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complex than the single issue of intemperance. The temperance, the labor, and the suffrage questions, she argued, were "really one." Victory for one of the issues was a step toward victory for the others.[61]

Far from being unsympathetic to the suppressed aspirations of workers, Miss Willard sought to join with them in overthrowing the power of the corporations and the moribund leadership of the major political parties. The inability of the true producers of wealth to correct the flaws of the economic order was the most critical problem facing the American worker. It was poverty that induced the laborer to drink and seek escape in the saloon. She saw without question that industrial capitalism was driving the self-reliant worker into a caste-like urban proletariat. Miss Willard found in Terence Powderly "a man mighty in deeds as well as in words," a leader capable of halting the pauperization of American society.[62]

Powderly's defense of equal pay for women, protection of women in industry, and equal rights for women, as well as his attacks on the liquor traffic and the saloon, corresponded to an expanded program of reform embraced by the WCTU. Powderly, she soon discovered, had some of the finest thoughts on the temperance question to be found in public life.

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[61] Minutes, NWCTU, 1888, p. 52.

[62] Frances E. Willard, Glimpses of Fifty Years: The Autobiography of An American Woman (Chicago, 1889), p. 423.

Once having recognized a potential friend in the Knights of Labor, the common link being temperance reform, Miss Willard sought to draw the two organization closer together. The Knights of Labor, she wrote in 1886, "will soon hold the balance of power at the polls, and under their present leadership are likely to vote right on the prohibition issue."[63] "Their triumph," she concluded, "is our own."

The president of the WCTU was quick to defend Powderly's temperance views from hostile critics, and particulary from critics within the labor movement. At the annual convention of 1889 in Chicago Miss Willard praised Powderly as a friend of the WCTU:

> No voice has rung out clearer for the prohibition of the Sunday saloon that that of Terence V. Powderly, that leader of the wage-workers, whose fame is burnished by every blow that falls on him from foes within and foes without the labor camp.[64]

Miss Willard and Powderly agreed in 1886 to exchange visiting delegations to the national conventions of each organization and to cooperate on major reform issues. The WCTU sent speakers to the assemblies of the Knights of

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[63] Quoted in Earhart, Frances Willard, p. 245.
[64] Minutes, NWCTU, 1889, p. 114.

Labor meeting in Minneapolis, Cincinnati, and Indianapolis in succeeding years.[65] In 1887 Elizabeth Rogers of Chicago, a former officer of the Detroit Assembly of the Knights of Labor addressed the convention of the WCTU on the movement for equal pay for women and the possible effects of woman suffrage on social reform.[66] When Miss Willard and Leonora Barry requested a representative of the Knights of Labor to attend the International Council of Women in 1888, Powderly happily complied.[67]

In addition to the major agreement on temperance reform, the WCTU and the Knights of Labor agreed on certain other crucial principles. In her letter to the Knights of Labor in 1886, Miss Willard wrote:

> With such of your methods as involve cooperation, arbitration and the ballot box, we are in hearty sympathy....We rejoice in your broad platform of mutual help, which recognizes neither sex, race, nor creed. Especially do we appreciate the tendency of your great movement to elevate women industrially to their rightful place, by claiming that they have equal pay for equal work; recognizing them as officers and members of your societies, and advocating the ballot in their hands as their rightful weapon of self-help in our representative government.[68]

When some members of the WCTU, persuaded by the press that members of the Knights of Labor were involved with the Haymarket rioters, became critical of any further alliance with Powderly, Miss Willard sought to reassure them. When she joined the Knights of Labor in 1887 few questioned the wisdom of her decision.

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[65] Willard, Glimpses of Fifty Years, pp. 423-424.
[66] Minutes, 1887, pp. 91-92.
[67] Earhart, Frances Willard, p. 249.
[68] Willard, Glimpses of Fifty Years, p. 413.

"Grogshops and Monopolies"

Frances Willard's views on political economy changed as she became better acquainted with the problems of the workers through her contacts with the Knights of Labor and her friendship with Powderly. The problems of the wage-worker she traced to one source, exploitation. While the saloon existed to exploit the worker, so did industrial capitalism. The theme running through her interpretation of the liquor traffic and the saloon, and her criticism of the social order, was the common theme of exploitation. I am glad, she remarked in 1888, that the WCTU "belongs to the newer school of political economists represented by Professor Ely, of Johns Hopkins University, rather than that of Professor Sumner, of Yale College."[69]

Miss Willard attacked industrial captialism as un-Christian and, therefore, uncharitable. The American economy had fallen prey to the monopolies and the trusts which were slowly extinguishing the individuality and freedom of the workers. Arbitration, cooperation, and the control of public transportation and communication by the State were the sensible alternatives to unrestrained corporate power. The trusts, however, could never be defeated "until heads are clear, hands steady, and hearts true." The tragedy of intemperance was not only that the saloon exploited the worker, but the drink debauched and incapacitated him, rendering the working man useless in the struggle to reform society.

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[69] Minutes, 1888, p. 50.

At the WCTU national convention in 1888 Miss Willard urged every delegate to read Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward. She found the idea of a cooperative commonwealth no more utopian than the idea of a society free from intemperance. In Looking Backward she praised the balance of economic and social humanitarianism she sought to incorporate with the doctrine of temperance. "The Utopia of today," she reminded her supporters, "is the accomplished fact of tomorrow."[70]

Miss Willard joined the Boston Nationalist Club, organized by the followers of Bellamy, and championed his ideas in her writings and addresses as president of the WCTU.[71] Like Bellamy, she saw the natural end of industrial aggression in a cooperative commonwealth, one where every man might call every other man brother. Rejecting the philosophy of the Luddites, she suggested that "we must reduce the hours of labor, and as monopolies multiply, humanists will in some future age be very likely to declare just one huge monopoly, and that will be humanity itself."[72] This was the vision of the Christian Commonwealth reformulated, a blueprint of a new society based on the "Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man."

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[70] Minutes, 1888, pp. 52-53.

[71] Howard Quint, The Forging of American Socialism (Columbia, S.C., 1953), p. 80.

In 1889 Frances Willard set forth the complete program of Bellamy's Nationalist movement and recommended that the national convention not only consider but act on every major point.[73] To "Christianize society into Brotherhood," reformers--the labor, temperance, and suffrage armies--must replace the old business ethic with the higher social law of God. "Combination must take the place of competition; we must have a system in which business shall be carried on, not for private profits, but for the public good. We must apply our Christianity to the Social Order," Frances Willard argued.[74] While the principles of the Nationalist movement did not mark the dawn of the new day, they revealed "at least in what direction the day will break."[75]

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[72] Minutes, 1889, p. 117.
[73] Ibid., p. 115.
[74] Ibid.

The Nationalist platform endorsed by Miss Willard called for State-supported relief projects to provide work for the unemployed.[76] The imposition of the "single tax" of Henry George was urged on all land held for speculation, together with the nationalization of all mines. The platform demanded the enactment of the eight hour day and the five and a half-day week to ease the burden of labor. Woman suffrage, abolition of the poll tax, civil service reform, and the Australian ballot were cited as necessary remedies to check the corruption of the political system. That part of the program devoted to education recommended the establishment of free technical schools and free lunches, supervisory services for children, and the raising of the compulsory school age for all children. The program demanded the abolition of the saloon and all licensing laws. Finally, the program called for the extension of "governmental control over railroads, telegraphs, furnishing of light and heat, manufactories, etc., preparatory to their gradual municipalization, or nationalization."[77] To strengthen their understanding of the importance of the social reforms she advocated, Miss Willard exhorted the members of the WCTU to read Looking Backward, to subscribe to The Dawn, and to organize Christian Socialist or Nationalist societies in their communities.[78]

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., pp. 116-117.
[77] Ibid., p. 117.

Mrs. Anna S. Carins, the national superintendent for the WCTU's department on labor and capital, echoed Miss Willard's words of the year before. "Capitalists sin against their employees from lack of thought. Let us appeal to them to arrange their manufactories, mining operations, yes, even the railroads, either on the co-operative, or else the profit-sharing, plan."[79] She suggested a program of social action calling for the eight hour day, the shorter week, abolition of child labor, and the prohibition of the saloon. "...read on the eight-hour movement and the single tax, that you may be informed," she wrote in closing her annual report to the national office.

The economic thought of Miss Willard shifted slowly from the futuristic humanitarianism of Looking Backward to Christian socialism after 1890. She wrote in 1891 that she was convinced that "the best practical application of a loving heart will come through Christian socialism."[80] She called for a strong coalition of "temperance men, workingmen and woman suffragists" to defeat the Capitalists.[81] In 1893 Miss Willard became a Fabian socialist, persuaded by her friendship with Lady Henry Somerset and her admiration for Sydney Webb.[82] Miss Willard also expressed a great regard for the English socialist, Keir Hardie, whose non-sectarian Christian socialism closely resembled her own.[83] "If the Trades Unions would make sobriety a condition of membership," she wrote, "they might be absolute masters of England and America to-morrow."[84]

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[78] Ibid., p. 116.
[79] Minutes, NWCTU, 1890, p. 368.
[80] Minutes, NWCTU, 1891, p. 119.

When the Pullman strike occurred in 1894 Miss Willard viewed the strike as an indictment of governmental policies which encouraged the trusts to exploit their employees: "it is the government itself which has created and fostered trusts and corporations, and that the millionaire is the necessary apex of the pyramid that we ourselves have builded."[85] While she blamed the government for the conditions which left the worker no alternative except to strike, she viewed the labor unrest of the early 1890s as the signaling of the "new dawn":

> We see the beginning of this wonderful uprising

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[81] Minutes, NWCTU, 1892, p. 124.
[82] Gordon, Life of Frances Willard, pp. 407-408.
[83] G. D. H. Cole, A History of Socialist Thought, Vol. III, Pt. I, (London, 1960), pp. 137-138, 147.
[84] Minutes, NWCTU, 1895, p. 104.
[85] Minutes, 1894, p. 115.

> against the power of the dollar, and the next generation will see the end, as we believe; for the evil will become so great that people will annihilate the trusts and blast the corporations, taking into their own hands these weapons too great to be wielded by any individual or corporation....[86]

The president of the WCTU blamed the nation's press, which she described as a judas goat deceiving "the unthinking masses," for the failure of the middle classes to understand the plight of the working-class family.[87]

Miss Willard spent the last years of her life pleading for working men, temperance reformers, and suffragists to join in redeeming the society she saw torn between "a vegetating aristocracy on the one hand, and an agitating democracy on the other."[88] In 1897 she explained to her fellow white-ribbon reformers why she was a Christian socialist:

> I would take, not by force, but by the slow process of lawful acquisition through better legislation as the outcome of a wiser ballot in the hands of men and women, the entire plant we call civilization... and make it the common property of all the people, requiring all to work enough with their hands...and permitting all to share alike the advantages of education and refinement.[89]

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[86] *Ibid.*, p. 116.
[87] *Ibid.*, p. 119.
[88] *Minutes*, 1895, p. 103.
[89] *Minutes*, 1897, . 119.

When her views appeared too radical to some members of the WCTU she refused to renounce them, or even modify them.[90]

As long as Frances Willard led the Woman's Christian Temperance Union she sought to cultivate the support of all working men for the ideal of temperance and, eventually, their aid in securing some type of prohibition legislation. She recognized that poverty was a major contributor to intemperance and she worked to secure social legislation in the interest of the working classes. She praised the Knights of Labor and formed a close association with that organization and with its leader, Terence Powderly. The worker was the true aristocrat of American society and the time would come, she wrote, "when those who do not work will be drummed out of the camp and stung out of the hive."

Her greatest hope was that labor and temperance reformers might join as a triumphant coalition of social reformers, for temperance reform was the key to any successful reform movement. "An injury to one is the concern of all," the motto of the Knights of Labor, "must be worked into the law and social institutions of American society," she vowed, and "we will help to do it." For a brief interlude Frances Willard believed that labor and temperance reformers might find a great ally in the men and women of the Populist movement, those who hated monopolies and exploitation as much as she did.

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[90] Earhart, Frances Willard, p. 247.

CHAPTER VII

FUSION TO FISSURE

Frances Willard's vision of an army for reform composed of suffrage, temperance, and labor groups sought expression in "fusion" politics. Her formula for fusion rested firmly on the prohibition of the liquor traffic and then expanded to include abolition of the trusts, government control of the railroads, free silver, woman suffrage, the iniative, referendum, and recall, the confiscation of unused land, and earlier such labor demands as the eight hour day.[1] She believed that all important reforms could be gained through the ballot box if only those who demanded them would come together in a new political party. Her search for allies led her to seek cooperation with the Knights of Labor, Greenbackers, the Northern Alliance, and the Populists. Between 1886 and 1893 the Knights of Labor indicated they were willing to participate in a fusion movement based on an acceptable definition of temperance reform.

The National Industrial Union

As early as 1884 temperance advocates in Massachusetts attempted to insert a temperance plank in the platform of the state Greenback party.[2] The effort at fusion was defeated when the party agreed that the regulation of the liquor traffic should not be made a partisan issue. In 1887 Father Edward McGlynn debated John Lloyd Thomas of Baltimore at the Cooper Union on the topic of the single tax versus temperance reform. As a practical reform for working men, Thomas argued, temperance legislation would do more to end poverty and industrial strife than any land or currency reform scheme and workers ought to be aware of its political importance.[3] Father McGlynn argued, on the other hand, that the single-tax of Henry George would abolish dependency faster than radical temperance legislation for it attacked the problem of poverty directly. Urban workers were encouraged by political conventions and speakers like Thomas to see the natural affinity of temperance reform to the single-issue movements of currency reform, land reform, woman suffrage, and governmental control of the trusts.

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[1] New York Times, October 20, 1895.

The Executive Committee of the National Industrial Union issued an invitation in 1887 to organize a new reform party composed of working men and farmers. Delegates were invited from the Knights of Labor, the Greenback Labor party, the Alliance, the Grangers, the Anti-Monopoly League, and smaller laborer and farmer groups.[4] The only important reform group excluded was the single-taxers, whose Eastern base and leadership aroused little excitement in the Midwest.

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[2] *John Swinton's Paper*, May 18, 1884.
[3] *New York Times*, October 31, 1887.

The convention met in Cincinnati in February and the Knights of Labor were represented by Richard Trevellick, who was committed to temperance reform, Robert Schilling, leader of the Wisconsin labor party and editor of the Milwaukee Advance, Benjamin Goodhue of the Illinois Knights of Labor, and labor-temperance fusionist, Alson J. Streeter of Chicago.[5] Trevellick was elected chairman of the convention and a letter from General James B. Weaver was read urging the convention to consider a number of social and economic reforms.

At the first evening session of the convention the question of temperance reform was introduced by fusionists and provoked a lively discussion of the relation of temperance reform to land and labor reform. The fusionists were led by E. E. Haaf of Henry County, Ohio.[6] Haaf, a Republican turned Prohibitionist, felt that the single-issue platform of the Prohibitionists was simply too narrow a foundation on which to build a popular political party. He attended the Cincinnati convention in the hope of broadening support for a prohibition law by fusing land and labor reform to the demand for strong temperance legislation. He appealed for the support of the Knights of Labor by insisting that "The saloon must go," and then argued for the fusion of the anti-saloon principle with labor and land reform.[7]

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[4] New York Times, February 10, 1887; Ware, The Labor Movement in the United States, p. 363.

[5] John Swinton's Paper, February 27, 1887.

[6] New York Times, February 23, 1887.

Opposition to Haaf's proposal was overwhelming, and included those initially in favor of some type of restriction of the liquor traffic. Critics of fusion argued that by annexing the prohibition issue Prohibitionists would be driven back into the Republican party thereby strengthening the foe. Other delegates doubted that the stand on the abolition of the saloon would bring many supporters into the new reform party.[8] The convention settled on a resolution acknowledging the importance of the problem of intemperance and the need for reform. Exploitation, excessive hours of labor, and poverty were the major causes of intemperance, the resolution stated, and "The measures of reform here demanded will prove to be the scientific solution to the temperance question."[9] The convention then devoted its major efforts to land reform proposals and the drafting of a platform demanding a graduated income tax, postal savings banks, the direct election of senators, and popular control of the transportation and communications industries.[10]

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.; New York Times, February 24, 1887.

[9] John Swinton's Paper, February 27, 1887.

The Union Labor Party, organized by the delegates to the Cincinnati convention, nominated Alson J. Streeter as its presidential candidate in 1888. Streeter's campaign was crippled by the refusal of the Knights of Labor to participate in the election and the fracturing of the Eastern labor vote by the single-taxers of Henry George.[11] Streeter was convinced of the value of fusion, and even after his humiliating defeat in 1888 he urged the Union Labor Party and the Prohibitionists to join in a common reform effort.[12]

John R. McCarty, a member of the Knights of Labor from Pennsylvania, repeated Streeter's plea for fusion several months later. In a letter to the Journal of United Labor McCarty called the basic principles of the Prohibitionists and the labor reformers the same, for "both ask equal rights for all."[13] The liquor industry, silently combining into one of the largest trusts in the nation, robbed the worker "of all his possessions and then pushes him into the gutter," he wrote. McCarty continued:

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[10] New York Times, February 24, 1887.

[11] Ware, The Labor Movement in the United States, p. 364.

[12] New York Times, February 17, 1889.

[13] JUL, August 8, 1889.

> An anti-monopoly party cannot be complete that does not specially proscribe the liquor traffic. Such a party must prohibit the manufacture, sale and keeping for sale of intoxicating liquors to be used as a beverage. Take this from the Prohibition party, add to it all the essentials in the platform of the Union Labor Party, and also what is contained in the principles of the Knights of Labor, and there will be created a party not only of the people, but for all the people....[14]

He closed his plea for fusion by noting that "the prohibition of intoxicating beverages is as much a labor question as any other."

The Union Labor Party disappeared in 1890, overshadowed by the growing strength of the Northwest Farmers' Alliance. Fusionists, therefore, turned their attention to persuading agrarian radicals that labor and temperance reform, combined with the demands of the Alliance, formed the most likely base for a new political coalition.

Prohibitionists and Populists

The proposal for an anti-monoply, labor, and temperance party had its advocates in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, where years of temperance work among the laboring classes had convinced many of the need to correct the abusive aspects of industrial capitalism. At the national convention of the WCTU in 1890, Anna Cairns, superintendent of the department on labor and capital, called for an alliance of the WCTU with the Knights of Labor, the Farmers' Alliance, the Agricultural Wheel, and the Grange.[15] The farmers, she announced, were at last awakening to the hard reality that they were not only under the heel of the railroads and manufacturers, but also under the heel of the liquor traffic and its ally, the political machine. She attended the meeting of the Farmers' and Laborers' Union and Northwest Alliance in 1889 in St. Louis where she met with Powderly and Carroll Wright of the BLS to strengthen mutual friendships.[16] She urged the white-ribboners and the Knights of Labor to work in greater harmony for reform and "as brother and sister to clasp hands."

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[14] *Ibid.*

Other white-ribbon reformers championed the idea of fusion with the farmer and the laborer. Linda W. Slaughter of North Dakota, a national organizer for the Knights of Labor and a member of the WCTU, also urged the delegates to the 1890 convention to seek closer cooperation with the Knights, the American Federation of Labor, the Wheel, and the Alliance in the cause of reform.[17] Sarah E. V. Emery, a leader of the radical wing of the WCTU, was highly respected by agrarian protest leaders for her attack on the "Crime of'73" which popularized the conspiracy theory of the demonetization of silver.[18] The writings of Sarah Emery formed a convenient link between inflation-minded farmers and prohibitionist critics of the liquor traffic who shared a conspiratorial view of politics.

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[15] *Minutes*, NWCTU, 1890, p. 369.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 372.

At the same time the WCTU proposed closer cooperation with the Knights of Labor and the Alliance, the leaders of the Prohibition party approached the Knights with a suggestion for fusion. The Voice of New York, the Prohibition party's newspaper edited by E. J. Wheeler and owned by the Funk and Wagnalls' Company, suggested in an exchange of editorials with the Journal of the Knights of Labor that the farmer and labor parties join with the Prohibitionists on the single issue of the regulation of the liquor traffic. In response to the fusion invitation the journal admitted with reservations that: "There is not, after all, much difference of opinion between us as to the injury which drink causes to the working classes."[19] The journal also agreed that reform required sobriety since

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[18] Walter T. K. Nugent, The Money Question During Reconstruction (New York, 1967), p. 20; Martin Ridge, Ignatius Donnelly: The Portrait of a Politician (Chicago, 1962), p. 306.

[19] JKL, April 30, 1891.

"the competitive system would be sooner overthrown if drunkenness or even excessive drinking were abolished."[20] Having made concessions of agreement, however, the journal quickly pointed out that intemperance was caused by a rapacious economic system and any political party which ignored or relegated to secondary importance the economic issues would not receive the support of the Knights of Labor.

When The Voice renewed its fusion invitation the Journal of the Knights of Labor retorted that the single-issue of prohibition was too narrow "for any party worthy of existence to stand upon."[21] Any attempt at fusion politics must see the new party take as its central principle the belief "that the producers of wealth and they only should be the possessors and enjoyers of it."[22] The journal also made it clear that the Knights' traditional insistence on temperance and its anti-saloon stand did not necessarily imply that it was ready to support or vote for a national prohibition law.

E. J. Wheeler had been encouraged to approach the Knights of Labor by Powderly's decision to attend the Alliance meeting in St. Louis in 1889 with Ralph Beaumont, the labor-temperance spokesman for the Knights, and Carroll

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[20] Ibid.
[21] JKL, May 7, 1891.
[22] JKL, June 11, 1891.

Wright, who had recently received the public thanks of the WCTU for his reports on women in industry. After the St. Louis meeting Powderly agreed to participate in the creation of a joint farmer-labor legislative committee in Washington to lobby for land, transportation, and currency reforms. Powderly then attended the larger Alliance gathering in Ocala, Florida, as the representative of the Knights of Labor, indicating a continuing interest on behalf of the Order in fusion politics.[23]

Wheeler was encouraged to seek a closer understanding with the Knights by a second important development, and that was the decision by Prohibitionists to broaden their platform to include social and economic reforms espoused by labor and farmer groups. The Prohibition party platform of 1888 not only called for the prohibition of alcoholic beverages, but also for woman suffrage, civil service reform, anti-monopoly legislation, arbitration of industrial disputes, land reform, immigration restriction, and equal pay for women.[24] The expanded platform, party leaders hoped, would appeal to workers and farmers. When The Voice suggested that the Knights of Labor might have no serious objections to fusion on the 1888 platform, or an expansion of it, the Journal of the Knights of Labor replied in the negative.[25] The anti-trust plank of 1888, the journal noted with derision, would be as effective in crippling the trusts as "a certain papal bull against the comet." The platform contained nothing on government ownership of the railroads or monetary reform, and looked "suspiciously like a decoy to win all manner of men to their standard." "It has not the true ring," the Knights' journal concluded.

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[23] New York Times, April 4, 1890; November 30, 1890.

[24] Kirk H. Porter and Donald Bruce Johnson, compilers, National Party Platforms (Urbana, 1961), pp. 78-79; D. Leigh Colvin, Prohibition in the United States (New York, 1926), pp. 190-192.

In several of the Midwestern states fusionists had greater success in attracting the combined support of Prohibitionists, Alliance men, Populists, and a few leaders of the Knights of Labor. General James B. Weaver, called "the wild ass of the prairies" by his detractors, held strong prohibitionist views as he made his way through the Republican, Greenback, and Populist parties of Iowa.[26] In 1883 he was described as the leader of the state's temperance crusade which drew popular support from a fusion of temperance and Greenback party factions. In 1890 the Prohibition party and the Farmers' Alliance of North Dakota agreed to endorse mutually acceptable candidates for office, but their combined efforts failed to elect a single endorsed candidate.[27] In Minnesota, however, fusion politics achieved a measure of success denied it elsewhere, uniting Populists, temperance reformers, and laborers.

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[25] JKL, July 2, 1891.

[26] Fred E. Haynes, Third Party Movements Since the Civil War, Reprint edition, (New York, 1966), pp. 185-187.

The Minnesota Pattern

The touchstone of fusion politics in Minnesota was Ignatius Donnelly whose public career was characterized by an insatiable appetite for the attack and rebuttal of campaign politics. Donnelly belonged, at one time or another, to almost all the significant political parties and movements in the Midwest after the Civil War, including the Republican, Democratic, Anti-monopoly, Greenback-Labor, Alliance, and Populist parties.[28] His fascination with fusion began with the Anti-monopolists in 1874-1875 and culminated with the Peoples' party in 1891-1892. The conservative leadership of the Democratic and Republican parties, combined with a large segment of disgruntled party members, a strong state organization of the Knights of Labor, a pluralistic and floating constituency, and a marked rural-urban ideological division created an ideal mixture with which to shape a fusionist movement.[29]

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[27] Ibid., p. 243.

[28] Helen McCann White, Guide to a Microfilm Edition of The Ignatius Donnelly Papers (St. Paul, 1968), pp. 2-6.

[29] Jonathan Garlock, "The Knights of Labor Data-Bank," Historical Methods Newsletter, Vol. 6 (September, 1973),

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In 1886 the Knights of Labor and the state Alliance agreed on a set of reform proposals which called for lower interest rates, regulation of the railroads and child labor, and industrial safety codes.[30] The leaders of the farmer-labor coalition were Ignatius Donnelly and J. M. McGaughey, the leader of the Knights of Labor.[31] Donnelly was elected to the state legislature on the reform platform of the coalition with the combined votes of Alliance men and independent Republicans. Between 1886 and 1888 Donnelly's popularity with the Knights of Labor grew, making him the natural go-between for labor and farmer political factions. His reform stature was enhanced among Prohibitionists when, as temporary Speaker of the House, he presided over the passage of a new high-license law for Minnesota.[32]

The Prohibition-temperance forces of Minnesota were active and well-organized in the 1880s. In 1888 they hoped to build a party capable of producing 25,000 to 30,000 votes in the state's presidential election. The Prohibition party organized a campaign to enroll sympathetic rural and urban voters, especially among the Scandinavian residents of the state.[33] Six prohibitionist organizers who spoke

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pp. 149-160.

[30] Ridge, Ignatius Donnelly, p. 521.

[31] Ibid., p. 249.

[32] New York Times, December 8, 1888.

[33] New York Times, October 10, 1888.

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either Swedish or Norwegian were appointed to travel through the farming counties in the Fall to generate enthusiasm among the Scandinavian-Americans for the Prohibition party. The Scandinavian prohibition-minded newspaper, Svenska Amerikanska Posten, had a circulation of almost 10,000 readers in 1888.[34] The English-language newspaper, the Northwestern Prohibitionist, also enjoyed a lively circulation and was read by urban and rural voters. Prohibition support came not only from Scandinavian farmers but from defecting low-tariff Republicans as well. The Prohibition party's candidate for governor in 1888 was Hugh Harrison, an 1884 Mugwump and a low-tariff Republican.

Ignatius Donnelly was nominated by the Farmer and Labor party, the coalition of the Knights of Labor and the Alliance, as its gubernatorial candidate in 1888. After accepting the nomination and promising to campaign on a reform platform, Donnelly withdrew when his colleague and friend, William R. Merriam, was nominated by the Republican party.[35] His withdrawal crippled the Farmer-Labor party and left them disorganized only weeks before the election. John P. McGaughey, Donnelly's ally in the Knights of Labor, predicted that most, if not a majority, of the Farmer and Labor voters would cross over to vote with the Prohibition party. "This breaking up of our ticket," McGaughey concluded, "will throw, I think, nearly two-thirds of the Labor vote to the Prohibition Party."[36] Merriam was elected governor and Clinton B. Fisk, the former Union general, received four times the number of votes cast for John St. John in 1884 as the Prohibitionists' presidential candidate.[37]

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ridge, Ignatius Donnelly, pp. 258-260.

In 1890 the Prohibition party won its first national victory when Kittle Halvorsen was elected to Congress from the Fifth District of Minnesota.[38] Halvorsen's nomination was endorsed by the Alliance Labor Union party which actively campaigned for his election.[39] The coalition of voters which supported Halvorsen represented the fusion of Prohibitionists, Alliance men, and labor members.

Between 1890 and 1892 fusionists in the state gained strength rapidly. In 1890 Donnelly was elected president of the Farmers' Alliance and returned to the legislature, and Miss Willard broadened her circle of political friends to include Mary E. Lease, Jerry Simpson, James B. Weaver, and Donnelly. In 1891 Frances Willard, at the suggestion of Wheeler of The Voice, invited Donnelly, James B. Weaver, and several other Populist leaders to attend "a private and informal" conference in Chicago to explore the possibility of fusing Populist and Prohibitionist principles into one reform platform.[40] The object of the meeting was to secure "a larger massed vote for reform movements than has hitherto seemed possible."[41] Miss Willard was induced to invite Donnelly after she read his indictment of immoral wealth in Caeser's Column, which she described as "Gabriel's trumph."

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[36] New York Times, October 14, 1888.

[37] Svend Peterson, A Statistical History of the American Presidential Elections (New York, 1963), p. 194.

[38] Colvin, Prohibition, p. 241; Ridge, Ignatius Donnelly, p. 276.

[39] Ridge, Ignatius Donnelly, pp. 276-277.

The result of the Chicago meeting of January, 1892, was a "consensus of opinion" fashioned by Weaver, Donnelly, Dr. G. De La Matyr, and Miss Willard. They drafted a tentative reform platform which endorsed government control of the railroads, currency reform, municipal suffrage for women, and an anti-saloon statement.[42] The reform manifesto was to be presented to the February Alliance convention in St. Louis. Not a single important labor leader was invited to the meeting, although Miss Willard felt sure she could count on Powderly's support when it came to voting on the fusion platform.

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[40] Frances E. Willard to Ignatius Donnelly, December 8, 1891. Ignatius Donnelly Papers, Microfilm Rolls, No. 101, 102, Minnesota Historical Society. Hereafter cited as: Donnelly Papers.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Haynes, Third Party Movements, p. 257.

Prohibition-minded advocates of refrom wrote Donnelly urging him to lend his support to Miss Willard and her followers. W. W. Williams of Spring Valley, Minnesota, wrote that he hoped "we Prohibitionists will receive such recognition from the People's party, as to warrant the conclusion that it is going to be the thing for the country."[43] A Populist from Worthington, Minnesota, expressed disappointment with the failure of the Cincinnati Alliance convention to endorse a temperance statement and predicted the Alliance would lose prohibitionist members if future conventions ignored the question.[44] Olaf Swenson, who spoke for many of the Swedish-Americans, attacked the "brandy men" and urged the Alliance to adopt a total abstinence declaration.[45] Barton O. Aylesworth, president of Drake University, wrote Donnelly that he was convinced that temperance and economic reformers must join together or face certain defeat. As a prohibitionist, he wrote, "I am ready to join upon any basis with honest men for the suppression of the saloon system."[46]

Donnelly's proposal to bring economic and temperance reformers together rested on the common meeting ground of anti-saloon sentiments. Stopping short of total prohibition, he supported the nationalization of the retail liquor trade and the abolition of the saloon. In Ohio the People's party had already endorsed the idea of nationalization, whose most popular Eastern exponents were Edward Bellamy and his Nationalist clubs.[47] In 1892 Donnelly set forth his recommendation for nationalizing the liquor trade at the invitation of The Voice.[48] His proposal recommended State ownership of the retail liquor system, the establishment of State-owned liquor shops with all interior attractions removed to discourage patrons, limited purchase and no on-premises consumption, and prices set slightly above cost to remove the profit motive from the liquor trade.[49]

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[43] W. W. Williams to Ignatius Donnelly, January 29, 1892. Donnelly Papers.

[44] C. F. Bond to Ignatius Donnelly, December 2, 1891. Donnelly Papers.

[45] Olaf Swenson to Ignatius Donnelly, January 26, 1892. Donnelly Papers.

[46] Barton O. Aylesworth to Ignatius Donnelly, February 4, 1892.

Ignatius Donnelly felt the nationalization scheme would appeal to a wide variety of reformers. He hoped that prohibitionists would be mollified by the abolition of the saloon and, at the same time, he felt that nationalization would not alienate citizens who opposed prohibition as a violation of personal civil liberties. The plan was also designed to minimize ethnic objections, since many immigrants viwed beer and wine as food stuffs.

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[47] Jack S. Blocker, Jr., "The Politics of Reform: Populists, Prohibition, and Woman Suffrage, 1891-1892," The Historian, Vol. 34 (August, 1972), pp. 614-632.

[48] Note to Ignatius Donnelly, January 29, 1892.

[49] Copy of an article prepared by Donnelly for publica-

Defending the anti-saloon position of the fusionists, and appealing for the support of working men, Donnelly blamed misgovernment for vice and the prevalence of intemperance. Poverty and insobriety were social ills that could only by corrected by establishing an honest and responsive government of the people. "The saloon," he wrote, "advocates no reform. If corruption money is to be disbursed it flows through the saloon. When labor combines for self-defense it finds the saloon hostile or indifferent. The longest purse always takes the saloon...."[50]

M. V. B. Scribner of South Dakota beseeched Donnelly to give his full support to nationalization rather than a prohibition law. In his view, Scribner argued, nationalization "would be a much stronger and safer plank than absolute prohibition. I find among the foreign element old drinkers who are dead set against prohibition but who would favor the other plan and vote with us."[51] A strict prohibition law, he added, would bring "the foreign element upon our backs with both feet."

Donnelly's proposal was immediately attacked by Samuel Dickie, national chairman of the Prohibition party, as "the

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tion in The Voice, 1892. Donnelly Papers.

[50] Ibid.

[51] M. V. B. Scribner to Ignatius Donnelly, February 8, 1892. Donnelly Papers.

most visionary, harebrained and impossible of the absurd make shifts ever devised by the society organized for the promotion of the great art of how not to do it."[52] Dickie's criticisms of nationalization were simple and to the point. What right did the State have to keep the oppressed and degraded in their old condition of perpetual intemperance? To the Prohibitionist it made little difference if a man became intoxicated in a saloon run by a private proprietor or by a state agency. "Nationalize the liquor traffic," Dickie retorted, "and you cover it with a mantle of decency and array it in a cloak of eminent respectability."[53] The evil of intemperance remained. Mutual discomfort replaced mutual esteem, and the prospects for a fusion ticket suddenly dimmed.

Fusion

The search for a formula to unite all of the reform parties at the national level sparked the same arguments and fracturing of potential alliances the fusion movement in Minnesota had generated. Miss Willard's vision of an alliance of temperance, suffrage, and labor forces was challenged at two national conventions, the Cincinnati convention of 1891 and the St. Louis convention of 1892, and was defeated on both occasions. The refusal of the Knights of Labor to participate with the WCTU in support of a prohibition law was a major factor in the failure of Frances Willard's blueprint for fusion.

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[52] Reply to Donnelly's proposal by Samuel Dickie, 1892. Donnelly Papers.

[53] *Ibid*.

In May, 1891, representatives from the Knights of Labor attended the National Union Conference in Cincinnati, a gathering of delegates from the Alliances to consider the formation of a third party.[54] The Prohibitionists were represented by George M. Miller, John St. John, and Helen M. Gougar, the volatile lawyer from Indianapolis.[55] When George Miller, a confederate of Miss Willard's, attempted to introduce a resolution calling for the abolition of the liquor traffic, Robert Schilling of the Knights of Labor successfully argued for its defeat.[56] James R. Sovereign, also of the Knights of Labor and Powderly's successor as GMW, strongly opposed the passage of any resolution permitting either the Federal or the state governments to prohibit the shipment and consumption of alcoholic beverages.[57] Both men were upholders of the Knights' stand against the saloon and the Order's emphasis on voluntary

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[54] John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party*, Bison Books, (Lincoln, 1964), pp. 212-216.

[55] *New York Times*, May 19, 1891.

[56] *New York Times*, May 21, 1891; Ridge, *Ignatius Donnelly*, pp. 285-286.

[57] Blocker, "The Politics of Reform," p. 620.

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sobriety. Schilling, who was a long-time member of the coopers union, feared that a prohibition resolution would alienate Midwestern German-American support for any fusion party, thereby weakening their efforts at the start. The coopers were also directly engaged in an aspect of the brewing industry, the manufacture of barrels, and out of loyalty to his former fellow-workers Schilling was not inclined to support legislation that might jeopardize their jobs. Prohibitionists, led by St. John, charged that the conference had been controlled by the saloon interests and left Cincinnati disenchanted with the idea of fusion.[58]

On February 2, 1892, the president of the WCTU wrote Donnelly suggesting a meeting on February 20th in St. Louis to agree upon a strategy to secure the adoption of the Chicago "consensus of opinion" at the Populist convention.[59] She requested that he bring to the meeting "any who are like-minded with yourself," while only the day before she had written a personal note to Donnelly seeking a suitable article on temperance for publication in The Union Signal.[60] The crux of the Chicago agreement in her view, and the basis for fusion, was the anti-saloon resolution which stated: "...the saloon is the great enemy of reform and the chief fountain of corruption in our politics. We denounce its pernicious influence upon our country and demand its suppression."[61] In January, 1892, when the "consensus of opinion" was reached between the farmer and temperance reform leaders, Miss Willard felt sure that the Knights of Labor would support the anti-saloon resolution even though she had not taken the trouble to invite a representative from the Order to attend the secret meeting.

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[58] Ibid., pp. 620-621.

[59] Frances E. Willard to Ignatius Donnelly, February 2, 1892, Donnelly Papers.

[60] Frances E. Willard to Ignatius Donnelly, February 1, 1892. Donnelly Papers.

When the St. Louis convention opened Prohibitionists led by Mrs. Gougar attacked the Chicago anti-saloon resolution on the grounds that it was intended as an endorsement of nationalization and not a true prohibition statement.[62] Mrs. Gougar and Samuel Dickie publicly broke with the WCTU delegation to the convention composed of Miss Willard, Clara Hoffman, and Lady Henry Somerset, president of England's WCTU.[63] In an attempt to repair the breach Miss Willard subsequently dropped the word "saloon" from the Chicago agreement and substituted the words "liquor traffic" to appease the Prohibitionsts at the convention.[64] In doing so she lost the support of the Knights of Labor who were represented by Terence Powderly,

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[61] As quoted in Blocker, "The Politics of Reform," p. 623.

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 625.

[63] *New York Times*, February 25, 1892.

[64] Blocker, "The Politics of Reform," p. 627

Robert Schilling, and John W. Hayes, editor of the Journal of the Knights of Labor.

Powderly and the Knights of Labor delegates were at first quite sympathetic to Miss Willard's anti-saloon proposal and when some delegates protested that the WCTU did not in a strict sense represent either toilers or tillers Powderly argued for seating the WCTU representatives.[65] When Miss Willard suddenly shifted from an anti-saloon to a prohibitionist position on the temperance question, however, the platform committee, whose chairman was Hugh Cavanaugh, Grand Worthy Foreman of the Knights of Labor, refused to approve her proposed reform plank.[66] The plank in its redrafted form called for the Federal government to recognize and honor all state prohibition laws, and the Order refused to support it in any way whatsoever. After her rebuff at the hands of those she considered allies in the fusion movement, Miss Willard and Lady Somerset withdrew from the convention and returned home.[67] The Knights of Labor also drew back from any further cooperation with the Populists, and the idea of labor, temperance, and agrarian reformers working together quickly evaporated.

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[65] New York Times, February 23, 1892.
[66] New York Times, February 24, 1892.
[67] New York Times, February 25, 1892.

Fissure

The turmoil created by the debate over prohibition at the St. Louis convention of 1892 indicated that organized labor, as represented by the Knights, was not to be tricked or cajoled into supporting prohibitory legislation. The Order stood for temperance and against the saloon, but the voluntaristic approach to temperance preached by Powderly and others did not encompass sumptuary laws. At the same time the Knights of Labor rejected prohibition, however, they endorsed Donnelly's call for the nationalization of the liquor traffic. The Journal of the Knights of Labor described nationalization as "an immense step in the direction of temperance" by eleminating the private profit motive from the trade.[68] The abolition of the saloon and the saloon-keeper would sweep away the machine politicians "like chaff before the wind." With the adoption of a nationalization law, the journal predicted, "There would be no longer a powerful liquor interest manipulating elections, controlling parties, and blocking the way of all temperance reform legislation."[69]

By 1893, shortly before his removal from office as Grand Master Workman, Powderly had lost his interest in further cooperation with the WCTU or the more extreme Prohibitionists of the Gougar-Dickie faction. He was openly skeptical of those Prohibitionists who talked of aiding the worker but put their own reform programs first. In October, 1893, he informed his former Prohibition friends that:

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[68] JKL, January 19, 1893.
[69] Ibid.

> We must first become really sincere in our efforts to reform the race thoroughly and in every way. Prohibiting the manufacture and sale of liquor will not make man better so long as other abuses continue to drive him to poverty.[70]

By the end of the nineteenth century temperance for the working man meant an antipathy to the saloon, voluntary total abstinence, and a willingness to consider legislation to abolish or reform the old-time saloon of the Gilded Age. The labor unions that continued to preach the doctine of sobriety in the Progressive Era were careful to distinguish between hostility to the saloon and sumptuary laws that dictated what a man might consume.

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[70] JKL, October 19, 1893.

CHAPTER VIII

GIVE THE WORKING MAN HIS BEER

During the nineteenth century national temperance enthusiasm peaked in two waves of intensity, the first in the early 1850s with the Maine Law of Neal Dow and the second in the 1880s with the passage of local-option laws by a number of states. At the end of the 1890s, however, most of the state laws were repealed and the Prohibitionists suffered a series of rebuffs from potential fusion allies. Of the eighteen states that adopted some type of prohibition before 1890, eleven had either repealed their laws or declared them unconstitutional. Other states refused to prosecute violators of anti-liquor laws or placidly ignored efforts by liquor and saloon interests to overturn local-option elections.[1] The beginning of the twentieth century marked a third wave of prohibition enthusiasm composed of non-partisan temperance reformers and prohibitionists, led by the Anti-Saloon League, dedicated to the passage of a national prohibition law that could not be invalidated by state governments reluctant to enforce anti-drink statutes.

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[1] Ernest H. Cherrington, The Evolution of Prohibition in the United States, Reprint edition, (Montclair, 1969), p. 249.

Drawing on the emotional sources of Progressivism, prohibition advocates argued more forcefully than ever that industrial society rendered intemperance an intolerable nuisance to public safety and individual prosperity.[2] The belief in order and efficiency shared by many Progressive leaders provided an important thrust in the drive toward the passage and ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment.[3] "As an integral part of the Progressive Movement," James Timberlake concluded, "prohibition drew on the same moral idealism and sought to deal with the same basic problems."[4] "Optimism was to be universal and compulsory," the Progressive Brand Whitlock noted, "stimulated by ginger-ale and grape juice."[5]

Businessmen and students of industrial efficiency saw in the demand for a national anti-drink law a new means to discipline and strengthen the enormous urban work force.

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[2] Recent studies of the prohibition movement are weighed in the following historiographical essays: John C. Burnham, "New Perspectives on the Prohibition 'Experiment' of the 1920's," *Journal of Social History*, 2 (Fall, 1968), pp. 51-68; Robert A. Hohner, "The Prohibitionists: Who Were They?," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXVIII (Autumn, 1969), pp. 491-505; and S. J. Mennell, "Prohibition: A Sociological View," *American Studies*, 3 (December, 1969), pp. 159-175.

[3] James H. Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1963), pp. 67-70; Alan P. Grimes, *The Puritan Ethic and Woman Suffrage* (New York, 1967), pp. 133-135.

[4] Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement*, p. 2.

[5] Brand Whitlock, *The Little Green Shutter* (New York, 1931), p. 76.

What the unions had sought to do through voluntaristic temperance programs, the new advocates for prohibition argued, the federal government might do more effectively. Corporations, other than those in the railroad industry, where they had long been committed to sobriety, suddenly found in the Anti-Saloon League a friend of corporate capitalism:

> Around 1908, just as the Anti-Saloon League was preparing for a broad, state-by-state drive toward national prohibition, a number of businessmen had contributed the funds essential for an effective campaign. The series of quick successes that followed coincided with an equally impressive number of wealthy converts, so that as the movement entered its final stage after 1913, it enjoyed not only ample financing but a sudden urban respectability as well. Substantial citizens now spoke about a new discipline with the disappearance of the saloon and the rampaging drunk.[6]

In large urban and industrial states businessmen who favored the League were joined by Social Gospel ministers, social workers, and even some labor leaders who believed that a national prohibition law would end working-class insobriety and abolish the saloon at once and forever.

As the third wave of temperance fervor began to build with the passage of the Georgia prohibition law of 1907, the leaders of the craft unions of the American Federation of Labor grew apprehensive, alarmed by the class nature of the appeals of the Anti-Saloon League and its allies. The members and the leaders of the unions were quick to resent the charge that workers and their families lacked the necessary training and character to shun the saloon, and, like children, must be treated as moral wards of the state. The prohibition laws passed by the states between 1907 and 1913 often impressed workers as laws designed to be evaded by the rich and born full-burden by the poor who could not hoard or import their own alcoholic beverages from nearby wet counties or states. To make matters worse, many of the craft unions had preached the necessity of temperance to their members since the Gilded Age. They instinctively felt that they had done more to promote sobriety among the working classes than all the anti-saloon leagues combined, an accomplishment prohibitionists refused to recognize. The fears and suspicions aroused by the Anti-Saloon League, added to the large reservoir of distrust inherited from the collapse of the fusion movement in 1893, consequently separated the major bodies of organized labor from the prohibitionsts of the early twentieth century.8

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[6] Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order, 1877-1920 (New York, 1967), pp. 290-291.

The Coming of Prohibition

The membership of the American Federation of Labor, after lagging far behind that of the Knights of Labor between 1885-1889, increased slowly through the 1890s as the Knights declined.[7] Almost all of the member craft unions of the AFL were steeped in the traditions of the sober and responsible artisan. The Iron Molders, Typographers, Marine Engineers, and other craft unions extolled the virtues of temperance in the spirit of the Big Four railroad brotherhoods. While the AFL was not drawn into the various reform alliances which enticed the Knights of Labor, the leaders of the organisation, including its president Samuel Gompers, openly acknowledged the importance of temperance to the worker and his family.

In 1900 a survey conducted on behalf of the Committee of Fifty by Raymond Calkins found that 85% of the craft unions of the AFL emphasized the necessity of sobriety and were in some way critical of the saloon's influence on the working man.[8] The organization, philosophy, and economic basis of the individual unions of the American Federation of Labor prevented the development of internal disciplinary procedures for punishing intemperance as the Knights of Labor had done. Several of the major unions of the AFL were directly tied to the saloon and the liquor traffic, and were acutely sensitive to undue pressure from the top on behalf of the cause of sobriety. The Brewery Workers, Bartenders, Flint Glass Workers, Coopers, Cigarmakers, Musicians, and Teamsters refused to endorse or support any official temperance policy for the AFL at the beginning of the Progressive Era. The Brewery Workers and the Bartenders were adamant in their opposition to the adoption of an anti-saloon policy by the Executive Council of the AFL. Powderly's cold-water views had driven the Brewery Workers from the Knights of Labor, an event not forgotten by Samuel Gompers or the Executive Council.

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[7] Leo Wolman, _The Growth of American Trade Unions, 1880-1923_, Publications of the National Bureau of Economic Research, 6 (New York, 1924), pp. 32-33.

[8] Raymond Calkins, _Substitutes for the Salon_, pp. 303-313.

Because of the opposition of the Brewery Workers, Bartenders, and allied unions the *American Federationist*, the official journal of the AFL, carried few temperance articles or essays in the 1890s and fewer still after 1900. An essay on the alcohol question written by Mrs. J. H. W. Stuckenburg was typical of the rather bland temperance articles published by the AFL's journal. The essay repudiated the old working-class belief that drink imparted strength and banished fatigue, and argued instead that intemperance was perpetuated by custom and labor ritual.[9] Furthermore, Mrs. Stuckenburg concluded, the most recent scientific findings indicated that alcohol "exerts a paralyzing effect on the brain and the spinal marrow, it reduces the temperature and interferes with the digestion."[10] The non-controversial nature of her remarks hardly invited a serious challenge from the Brewery Workers.

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[9] *American Federationist*, 3 (1896), p. 221.

The survey of trade union attitudes toward the saloon compiled by Edward W. Bemis of the Bureau of Economic Research and published by Calkins in 1901 revealed that nine of thirty-nine craft unions actively opposed the existence of the saloon; the nine craft unions included the Conductors, Firemen, Seamen's Union, Tailors, and Typographers among others.[11] Other unions expressed a modified hostility to the saloon, and those unions included the United Mine Workers, Retail Clerks International, Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Carriage and Wagon Makers, Bakers, and a number of lesser unions.[12] The pro-temperance craft unions prohibited locals from meeting in the saloon, refused to serve alcoholic beverages at union functions, restricted insurance benefits to temperate members only, and exluded the saloon-keeper from union membership.

Individual craft unions took specific steps to weaken the allurement of the saloon for their members. The Bakers' Union maintained a separate hiring hall away from the nearby saloon to discourage workers from spending their remaining wages with the liquor-seller. The United Garment Workers' Union encouraged all of its locals to find meeting halls not connected with the saloon. In 1894 the International Typographical Union had passed a prohibition resolution calling for "the state and national destruction of the liquor traffic," and remained strongly pro-temperance in its views after 1900.[13] Craft unions continued to discipline intemperate members as they had in the nineteenth century through fines, suspension, or expulsion from the union, and, with the cooperation of sympathetic employers, dismissal from employment. The Elevator Constructors' Union regularly excluded known tipplers from membership for the sake of industrial safety. Union members found guilty of drinking on the job were suspended for one month and fined, and on the second offense the member was expelled without provision for reinstatement.[14] The Postal Record, the journal of the National Association of Letter Carriers, reported 244 dismissals for intoxication between 1900 and 1903.[15] In light of the high discharge rate for intoxication J. Eugene Lackey of the NALC urged all members to "Shun liquor as you would shun smallpox. Fear not to say you are afraid of it."[16]

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Calkins, Substitutes for the Saloon, p. 303.

[12] Ibid., pp. 306-310.

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[13] Ibid., pp. 304-306.
[14] The Union Signal, July 24, 1913.
[15] The Postal Record, July, 1904, p. 162.
[16] Ibid.

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The Letter Carriers' Union, organized in 1889, was diligent in its efforts to promote the cause of temperance and improve the public image of the postman. Editorials in The Postal Record warned letter carriers of the dangers of imbibing when in uniform, the results of habitual intoxication, and praised the temperance work of the union. One of the important objectives of the NALC was "to eliminate, as far as possible, this evil [intemperance] and to raise to the highest standard the moral personnel of its members."[17] After a series of essays in favor of temperance published between 1901 and 1904, The Postal Record felt compelled to state that the union, while strongly in support of sobriety, was not to be identified with the prohibitionists, which the journal described as "irrational extremists."[18] The leadership of the union drew a clear distinction between the temperate use of alcoholic beverages, such as beer, and the habitual use of hard intoxicants, which it denounced.[19] The temperance attitude of the NALC was representative of the majority of the AFL craft unions in the Progressive Period with a tradition of promoting the virtue of sobriety. .

The rekindling of anti-drink fervor which roused supporters in every section of the nation forced the craft unions to re-examine their definition of temperance. The journal of the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders warned members against excessive, or habitual, drinking and cautioned all who drank to do so in moderation. J. L. Feeney, editor of The International Bookbinder, wrote: "Although the editor of this journal is a total abstainer, he is not at all opposed to social drinking when it is not abused."[20] The International Musician, published by the American Federation of Musicians, warned that the passage of a prohibition law would be a great setback for temperance, since the light beer and wines of the moderate drinker would be banned, and the only beverages then available would be the adulterated substitutes peddled in blind tigers and speakeasies.[21] Bootleg liquor would replace the beer of the worker because it was "less bulky, and easier handled, including the smuggling and concealing of it."

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[17] The Postal Record, December, 1902, p. 312.

[18] The Postal Record, September, 1904, p. 204.

[19] The Postal Record, February, 1901, p. 36; editorial, April, 1904.

The Shoe Workers' Journal suggested that the true difference between prohibition and temperance was "the difference between force and education."[22] As a moral issue, the journal explained:

> ...we believe in education for temperance

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[20] The International Bookbinder, April, 1904, p. 52.
[21] International Musician, April, 1908, p. 8.
[22] Shoe Workers' Journal, September, 1909, pp. 30-31.

> as against forceful prohibition. We believe that the conviction that thou should not drink to excess, will be of more benefit to the race and to manly character than the command 'you shall not drink at all'....[23]

The officers of the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union immediately dismissed prohibition as an economic reform designed to benefit working men by removing one of the major causes of dependency. The union's journal made the conservative estimate that a million jobs would disappear with the arrival of national prohibition; temperance, on the other hand, protected the jobs of thousands of workers and provided millions in tax revenues.

The most serious objection raised against prohibition was that any form of anti-drink legislation was inherently class legislation, since the rich had the financial means to circumvent the enforcement of the law. A major criticism of prohibition, the American Federation of Musicians' journal commented, is:

> that it is class legislation of the most offensive character. It can only be made operative against the poorer classes. No law can be framed that would stand the test of the Supreme Court that would prevent a man of means from stocking his cellar and sideboard with all the viands he desired. The saloon is the poor man's club. Abolish it, and you drive him to the blind tiger. The Saloon can be regulated, the patron protected against vile adulteration, and the public against

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[23] *Ibid*.

> possible disorder, and prohibition never can and never will be enforced on American soil. It is a blow at personal liberty....[24]

The conviction that prohibition discriminated against the worker and the poor pre-dated the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment and the passage of the Volstead Act, but the administration of the dry laws quickly strengthened the belief that working men were the real victims of anti-drink legislation. The personal liberty argument was invoked by all the unions tied in some way to the liquor traffic, an[redacted]ving. The members of the Musicians union performed in restaurants and cafes where intoxicants were sold and feared the adverse economic results of prohibition.

The success of the Anti-Saloon League consolidated labor opposition to prohibition, although it was never unanimous. The evangelical Protestantism which tempered the League's attack on the saloon and the liquor business struck many workers as the revival of social intolerance and "the blue laws of the witch-burning days of old Puritanical New England."[25] The National Model License League, organized by the breweries and the saloon-keepers to combat the Anti-Saloon League, sought the support of unions with a vested interest in the freedom of Americans to purchase and consume alcoholic beverages. In a long circular sent to AFL unions the Model License League sought to discredit the lobby of the Drys by alleging that the Anti-Saloon League was conducting a get-rich-quick scheme at the expense of well-meaning but mis-informed individuals. Unnamed leaders of the Anti-Saloon League were "charged with a large and interesting variety of crimes, principally the crime of defalcation."[26] The brewers' national lobby claimed that 75% of the funds collected from the foes of the saloon paid the salaries of a small clique of greedy officers. The journal of the American Federation of Musicians reprinted the circular in its entirety and promised to help "smoke these grafters out."

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[24] International Musician, April, 1908, p. 8.
[25] International Musician, September, 1908, pp. 5-6.

While unions with an economic stake in the continuation of the saloon gathered workers to their cause, other unions were willing to give the prohibition advocates a patient hearing.[27] The International Seamen's Union of America, which represented seamen on both coasts and the Great Lakes, defended the traditional definition of temperance for workers, but in 1909 the union's journal admitted that insobriety might constitute a greater social threat than prohibition. Abstinence and sobriety were the prerequisites to "industrial and social progress" the Coast Seamen's Journal stated:

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Retail Clerks International Advocate, October, 1903, pp. 2-3.

> The Journal favors sobriety--absolute sobriety--and therefore believes that all measures designed to encourage that condition should be supported ....We do not believe that the principle of 'personal liberty' should be invoked solely for the benefit of those who favor the unrestricted sale of intoxicants. So construred, the principle becomes a matter, not of liberty, but of license.[28]

The journal suggested that unions linked to the liquor traffic ought to recognise the need for reform and at least "remain silent rather than speak out on the wrong side." The blind refusal to restrain saloon practices which flaunted the law and community standards made strict prohibition a certain eventuality.

In the spirit of the radical unionism of the Wobblies the saloon was denounced as the tool of Capitalists, the social instrument to exploit and immobilize the worker. Working-class drunkenness rendered protests against the economic order ineffective; intoxicants were the cheapest anodyne with which to drug the laboring population. Capitalists, the Coast Seamen's Journal argued, make sure "that there will always be a saloon on every corner in the neighborhood where you and I live. Yea, bo, whisky is a most valuable friend of capitalism; and so long as you drink it you're an enemy of your class."[29] Abstemious labor radicals saw the saloon and drunkenness as the natural products of an acquisitive society which worshipped entrepreneurship and greed.[30]

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[28] Coast Seamen's Journal, October 27, 1909, p. 6; March 25, 1908, pp. 6-7.

By 1910 railroad workers were long accustomed to stringent company temperance rules and the growth of the prohibition movement after 1907 was supported by the unions in the industry. Indeed, company rules were extended to include rail employees who did not belong to the Big Four brotherhoods, where the doctrine of sobriety was the most deeply entrenched. In 1908 the Baltimore and Ohio extended its anti-drink policy to cover all operating employees:

> Officers and employes will take notice that there will not be employed, nor permitted to remain in service, in the capacity of train master, dispatcher, operator, engineer, fireman, or trainman,

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[29] Coast Seamen's Journal, August 13, 1913, p. 2. The Rev. Charles Stelzle, who admired the temperance stand of the seamen, wrote: "...the total abstainer is not only clear-headed, seeing the injustices in the industrial world, but he makes a better fighter than the booze-soaked worker, whose horizon is bounded by the rim of a glass of beer." Charles Stelzle, Why Prohibition! (New York, 1918), p. 113.

[30] In defense of nationalizing the liquor industry, The Worker of Brisbane, Australia, commented: "The drink curse is part of the bitter price we pay to Capitalism for such service as it renders to manking. It springs directly from the degradation of human nature involved in the existence of laborious poverty and loafing opulence." As quoted in the Coast Seamen's Journal, December 11, 1912, p. 6.

> yardman, block or signalman, watchman, or in other positions where in any way charged with the direction or operations of trains, persons who use intoxicants, either while on duty or off duty.[31]

The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad preferentially hired total abstainers and the Soo Line prohibited its workers from boarding in saloons or "to frequent the same." Smaller rail lines invoked the right to dismiss any worker found entering a drinking establishment, even during off duty hours.[32]

In 1899 the famous Rule G was adopted by the member lines of the American Railway Association and formed the basic temperance policy of the industry before the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment. Rule G stated: "The use of intoxicants by employes, while on duty, is prohibited. Their habitual use or the frequenting of a place where they are sold, is sufficient cause for dismissal."[33] Thirty-three railroads subscribed to Rule G, although most companies enforced more stringent temperance policies of their own.

The railroad unions cooperated with the companies in the implementation of Rule G. The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, for example, upheld all company dismissals for violation of the rule in conformity with its motto of "Benevolence, Sobriety and Industry." As James M. Murphy, legislative representative of the union, explained to Franklin Hichborn of the California Dry Federation: "No class of men has suffered more keenly the pangs of its effects than railroad men and their families to whom have come unhappiness, degradation, grief, and poverty as the result of liquor using."[34]

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[31] Ernest H. Cherrington, editor, Anti-Saloon League Year Book, 1909 (Columbus, Ohio), p. 143.

[32] Ibid., pp. 143-144.

[33] Ibid., p. 145; Timberlake, Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, p. 68.

Major industrial corporations followed the lead of the American Railway Association by instituting temperance requirements for employment or promotion before the adoption of prohibition. International Harvester, Western Electric, United States Steel, Western Union, Standard Oil, Pullman, and Sears, Roebuck were only a few of the largest businesses to enforce company sobriety regulations. At least one employer, the Philadelphia Quartz Company, used an incentive plan to encourage the sobriety of its workers. The company offered a 10% wage increase to all employees who signed the total abstinence pledge.[35] In the corporate sector of American life hundreds of thousands of workers were affected by private restrictions on their right to drink before Congress and the state legislatures made sumptuary laws a matter of public administration.

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[34] The Union Signal, April 25, 1918.

[35] The Union Signal, April 1, 1915.

In order to establish support for prohibition among workers and unions cool, or even hostile, to the abolition of the saloon and the alcoholic beverage industry reformers, social workers, and Social Gospel ministers argued with uncritical optimism that prohibition would be a great blessing in particular for America's laboring classes. Theodore F. Thieme of the Citizens' League of Indiana blamed the saloon interests in part for the failure of state constitutional revision which would have granted home-rule to Indiana cities.[36] "Every attempt to bring about reforms in governmental conditions in city, county, or state," Thieme wrote, "bumps up hard against two powerful obstacles--public utilities and liquor."[37] Theodore Roosevelt enhanced his reputation as an urban reformer by his determination as police commissioner to end illegal Sunday sales of intoxicants by New York's free-wheeling saloon operators.[38] Progressive sociologists castigated the saloon for exploiting the urban worker and causing the deterioration of factory neighborhoods.[39] "The saloon," recalled Brand Whitlock, "was as bad as they said it was, and, with the drinking customs prevailing in America, was a public nuisance."[40] In general Progessives viewed prohibition as an important step in the restoration of political and economic opportunity for all citizens.[41]

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[36] Theodore F. Thieme, "Liquor and Public Utilities in Indiana Politics," (Fort Wayne, 1915), pp. 8-14.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[38] Henry F. Pringle, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography*, Harvest Books, (New York, 1956), pp. 99-101.

[39] Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, and Roderick D. McKenzie, *The City* (Chicago, 1967), pp. 31, 75-76.

Delegates to the National Conference of Social Work in 1917 praised the impact of prohibition on the poor in revolutionary Russia. Professor Irving Fisher of Yale, who consistently appealed to working men for their support of anti-drink legislation, advised the conference that:

> Although it is not yet generally known in this country, it would appear...that prohibition in Russia has already wrought a miracle upon the Russian people physically, mentally, morally and economically. The increase in the people's savings alone has amounted to one-sixth of the cost of the war to Russia.[42]

Fisher also justified a prohibition law on the grounds that abolition of the saloon was essential to the improvement of the public health of the working classes. His sentiments were endorsed by Frederic Almy, Florence Kelley of the National Consumers League, Edward T. Divine of the New York School of Philanthropy, and other leading social workers.

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[40] Whitlock, The Little Green Shutter, p. 40. While he opposed the saloon, Whitlock did not readily favor the Prohibitionist's intractable solution to the problem. Brand Whitlock, Forty Years of It (New York, 1914), p. 298.

[41] Timberlake, "The Political Argument," Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, pp. 100-124.

[42] Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work, Pittsburgh, 1917, p. 183.

Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, the head chemist of the Department of Agriculture and a major contributor to the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, also defended prohibition as a reform measure to improve public health and industrial efficiency. After years of advance and retreat, Wiley wrote, the cause of total abstinence had found itself at last. The struggle between wets and drys was "the old irreconcilable fight between alcohol and efficiency; between the two there can be no compromise."[43] It was necessary to deprive the Black man of the saloon, Booker T. Washington advised, in order "to save Southern industry."[44] Luther Burbank, Charles W. Eliot, Julia Lathrop, Gifford Pinchot, John Spargo, and Mark Sullivan shared a common conviction that prohibition would elevate and improve the health and morals of the worker.

Social Gospel ministers lauded the prohibition crusade as a major social and economic advancement. In his study of the Social Gospel movement, Paul Carter found that the churches that espoused Social Gospel doctrines were also committed to the prohibition cause:

> Not only did Prohibition and the Social Gospel arise in the same churches at the same time, but evidently political liberals in those churches

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[43] The Union Signal, March 16, 1911; May 18, 1916.

[44] Inglehart, King Alcohol Dethroned, p. 257; Washington, "Prohibition and the Saloon," pp. 587-589.

> were often as not political 'drys' as well; and some of them regarded the one reform movement as part and parcel of the other.[45]

The Federal Council of Churches, established to carry out the social programs of the urban churches, contributed over $100,000 to the prohibition drive and welcomed the legal extinction of the saloon in 1920.[46]

The most influential Social Gospel spokesman to argue the prohibition cause with working men directly was the independent Presbyterian labor minister, the Rev. Charles Stelzle. In The Workingman and Social Problems (1903) he summarized the conclusions of the Committee of Fifty on the evils of the saloon.[47] In 1917 Stelzle compiled a pamphlet, "Liquor and Labor," for the Anti-Saloon League of New Jersey which explained how prohibition would be a great economic boon to all workers.[48] In "Liquor and Labor" he furnished statistical information and numerous graphs purporting to show that the workers of New Jersey would be better paid, more productively employed, and healthier when the saloon was gone. Stelzle dismissed the claim of the brewery workers and bartenders that prohibition would destroy one of America's great industries, and called attention to the fact that there were only 8,000 distillery workers and 66,000 brewery workers employed in those industries.[49] Based on capital investments, the breweries employed fewer workers and paid them less than most other major industries.[50]

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[45] Paul Carter, The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel (Ithaca, 1954), p. 34.

[46] Ibid.; "Social Reconstruction Program of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America," Monthly Labor Review, August, 1919, pp. 368-377; The Union Signal, November 29, 1917.

[47] Charles Stelzle, The Workingman and Social Problems (New York, 1903), pp. 37-50.

[48] Charles Stelzle, "Liquor and Labor: A Survey of the Industrial Aspects of the Liquor Problem in New Jersey," (Newark, 1917), pp. 7-30.

There was also an obvious tinge of nativism threaded through his argument. He identified the bartenders of New Jersey with the state's extensive ethnic population and estimated that 77% of the bartenders came from a foreign background. In dealing with the saloon question in New Jersey, he wrote, one "must consider the question from the racial standpoint."[51] The small number of native-born saloon-keepers led him to conclude that: "American-born citizens apparently do not wish this employment, or else are boycotted by employers, as liquor dealers and employees are almost exclusively of foreign birth or parentage."[52] The possibility that foreign-born workers would feel the worst effects of dry legislation presumedly softened the opposition of native-born workers to the idea of prohibition.

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[49] Ibid., p. 39.
[50] Ibid., p. 4.
[51] Ibid., p. 28.
[52] Ibid., p. 30; the nativist Henry Pratt Fairchild employed a similar argument in The Melting-Pot Mistake (Boston, 1926), pp. 213-215.

Stelzle's most popular appeal to workers was Why Prohibition!, written in praise of war-time prohibition. The economic arguments cited against the liquor industry were colored by the martial spirit of "winning the war." John Barleycorn became Kaiser Alcohol. "Drink decreases happiness, makes us less efficient and multiplies our chances of losing the war," he wrote.[53] Stelzle promised that a dry America would be a busy America. When the worker could no longer buy intoxicants, "he will spend his wages for food and clothing and furniture and other necessities of life creating work and wages and increased business for all kinds of legitmate industries."[54]

He refuted the doctrine that prohibition violated the tenets of personal liberty by arguing that trade union membership had always imposed limitations on the freedom of the worker. From the beginning unions sought to limit the hours and conditions of employment:

> The doctrine of personal liberty is a relic of the old Manchester School of extreme individualism. There is absolutely no room for this philosophy in the trade union movement. The doctrine of personal liberty carried out to its logical conclusion would wipe out every labour union in the world.[55]

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[53] Stelzle, Why Prohibition!, p. 55.
[54] Ibid., p. 58.
[55] Ibid., p. 79.

Prohibition, like some other Progressive reforms, was designed "to take care of the weakest members of society."

When the United States Brewers' Association attempted to counter Stelzle's prohibition appeal by circularizing the trade unions with contrary claims, the International Seamen's Union was not impressed. "...we should say," the union's journal responded, "that the economic importance of the liquor business is the strongest argument for its abolition. The Brewers have proved too much for their own good; in fact, they have proved the charges of their opponents."[56]

Reform Jews shared the enthusiasm for social reform common to urban Catholics and Protestants. Rabbi Stephen Wise supported prohibition and, claiming that he represented "the conscience of the Jewish people," believed that most American Jews did too.[57] Catholic workers were called upon to embrace individual prohibition, meaning voluntary total abstinence, and reminded of the strong temperance stand taken by the Americanist bishops--Gibbons, Ireland, and John Lancaster Spalding. The Rev. Regis Canevin, Bishop of Pittsburgh, Father James M. Cleary, and, initially, Father John A. Ryan were favorable to the concept of the Eighteenth Amendment and hoped Catholics would coöperate with the experiment of a saloon-less society.[58]

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[56] Coast Seamen's Journal, December 11, 1912, p. 6.

[57] The Union Signal, April 25, 1918. Further comments by Wise are found in the Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Congress Against Alcoholism, Washington, 1920.

The pleas and promises that prohibition was indeed a "noble" idea failed to calm the distrust unions felt toward the movement. The strong suspicion that the anti-drink crusade was a smokescreen to divert public attention from the real economic and social problems remained.[59] The passionate effort of the Anti-Saloon League to secure the enactment of an interstate commerce law to protect dry states marked the beginning of twenty years of struggle between trade union wets and Prohibitionists. In 1912 the German-American Alliance of Missouri, which included German brewery workers, bartenders, musicians, and affiliated workers, protested the passage of a bill before Congress to forbide the shipment of alcoholic beverages into dry states. The bill, the alliance contended, was "in restraint of commerce, confiscatory and destructive of personal property."[60] In 1913 Congress passed the Webb-Kenyon Act over President Taft's veto with ease. The Anti-Saloon

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[58] Proceedings, Congress Against Alcoholism, pp. 137-138; Anti-Saloon League Year Book, 1909, p. 217.

[59] "There is a well-grounded belief extant that the present prohibition agitation is being fostered and financed by the 'great interests'...who hope to distract public attention by diverting it to the evils of the drink traffic...." International Musician, April, 1908, p. 8.

[60] International Musician, August, 1912, p. 15.

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[60] International Musician, August, 1912, p. 15.

League had proved its power as the national lobby of the drys.

In 1914 the House of Representatives passed the Hobson Joint Resolution providing for a national prohibition amendment to the Constitution, but not by the required two-thirds majority.[61] Labor wets reacted quickly to the first real threat of a prohibition law and Prohibitionists were arraigned as possessed faddists in pursuit of the millenium, or as pinched and narrow-minded fanatics.[62] *The Paper Makers' Journal* warned its readers that Prohibition would bring a return of the "iron law of wages." When workers no longer visited the saloon, employers would use the new law as an excuse to pay them less:

> Diminish the cost of subsistence by the amount spent in connection with the saloon, and what would become of the margin? Who would get it? The workingman? Nay, nay. It would go to the employer. He lays claim to the difference and he keeps it.[63]

One must wonder, the journal continued, "at the audacity or ignorance of prohibition agitators who try to induce--or shall we say, seduce--workingmen to vote for prohibition...."

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[61] Andrew Sinclair, *Era of Excess: A Social History of the Prohibition Movement*, Colophon Books, (New York, 1962), pp. 154-156.

[62] *International Musician*, November, 1915, p. 10; *The Garment Worker*, May 29, 1914.

[63] *The Paper Makers' Journal*, June, 1914, pp. 10-11.

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Joseph Proebstle of the International Brewery Workers' Union, aside from Gompers the major spokesman for the labor wets, warned that the Prohibition movement was a severe threat to the existence of a number of important unions including his own. Behind the movement, he charged, were the nation's "trusts and big industries" whose officers saw prohibition as an opportunity to destroy a large segment of organized labor. He continued:

> It is not merely the intention of the people who support the prohibition movement financially to destroy the Brewery Workers, Bartenders, Cigarmakers, and other directly connected trades, who depend upon the liquor industry for a livelihood--the prohibition supporter aims to effect, and if possible, destroy all organized efforts of every trade or calling.[64]

Wherever prohibition was the law, jobs and wages were quickly reduced. Furthermore, the "captains of industries" used the anti-drink crusade to distract attention from "their stealing of natural resources, the public utilities, and the milking of the public through the wholesale watering of stocks."[65]

The Brewery Workers appealed to other unions to use their influence to defeat state anti-saloon or prohibition laws, and the appeals increased after 1914 when the union established a separate department to thwart the drive of the prohibitionists.[66] Friendly wets were recruited to contribute articles sympathetic to the brewing industry and the saloon to labor newspapers. Philip Rappaport of Indianapolis, who was later employed as a lobbyist by the Indiana State Brewers' Association, defended the saloon as the peculiar social institution of the worker and blamed insobriety on long hours, short pay, and erratic employment. "The straight-jacket is a poor instrument of reform," Rappaport wrote in the miners' journal. "Anything which ameliorates the condition of the working classes will accomplish more toward the abolition of inebrity in a week than prohibition will in a century."[67] He assured the miners that the most successful way to curb drunkenness was through economic reform, since poverty was the cause of perpetual intoxication.[68]

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[64] International Musician, July, 1915, p. 16.
[65] Ibid.

In 1908 when the Anti-Saloon League clamored for the passage of a local-option law in Maryland the state federation of labor came to the defense of the brewery workers. At the state convention in Baltimore delegates passed a

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[66] *The Paper Makers' Journal*, May, 1915, pp. 32-33; Nuala McGann Drescher, "Organized Labor and the Eighteenth Amendment," *Labor History*, 8 (Fall, 1967), pp. 285-286.

[67] *The United Mine Workers' Journal*, December 28, 1905; United States Senate, Subcommittee on the Judiciary, *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda*, 66th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, D. C., 1919), Vol. 1, p. 833.

[68] *The United Mine Workers' Journal*, October 4, 1906; February 1, 1912.

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resolution calling for the defeat of the bill and the dispatch of a delegation of protest to Annapolis.[69] In Rhode Island labor wets joined the brewery workers, bartenders, and their employers to defeat the No-License League's campaign to extend local option.[70]

The United States Brewers' Association cooperated closely with the Brewery Workers to secure large-scale support from organized labor in the industry's struggle with the Anti-Saloon League. The USBA deliberately curried the union's favor by avoiding bitter strikes or strained labor relations. Hugh Fox, executive secretary of the USBA, enforced a policy of "noninterference" when brewer and worker disputed wages or working conditions. The parties were permitted to "fight it out among themselves" without the fear of strike-breakers or industry products shipped in to break the strike.[71] The National Association of Commerce and Labor, the lobbyist for the brewers led by Percy Andreae, supplied labor periodicals with wet and anti-dry tracts free of charge. The USBA employed several full-time organizers for the labor movement, the most important of whom was George J. Thompson formerly of the Cigar Makers' International Union. Individual brewers drew up boycott lists and instructed their workers not to buy from businesses contributing funds or leaders to the Anti-Saloon League.[72]

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[69] Brewing and Liquor Interests, Vol. 1, pp. 1131-1132.
[70] Ibid., p. 789.
[71] Ibid., p. 84.

Proebstle, as secretary of the Brewery Workers, was the important link between the USBA and the union in crucial wet-dry elections in urban states where the labor vote might prove decisive.[73] Proebstle, who antagonized the brewers during the violent Los Angeles strike of 1910, was greeted warmly by them after 1912 as an ardent foe of the drys.[74]

Through the coordinated efforts of the USBA and the Brewery Workers, Trades Union Liberty Leagues, or Wet Leagues, were organized between 1913 and 1916 to rally the vocal wet forces in the labor movement. The chief support for the Wet Leagues came from the Brewery Workers, Bartenders, their employers, and affiliated unions such as the Cigar Makers, with the breweries contribuing 50% of the funds for publicity, speakers, and printing expenses. By 1916 there were leagues in the major northern and western industrial states, while only one southern state, Texas, supported an active Wet League.[75] The USBA identified eighteen trade unions tied to the brewing industry and

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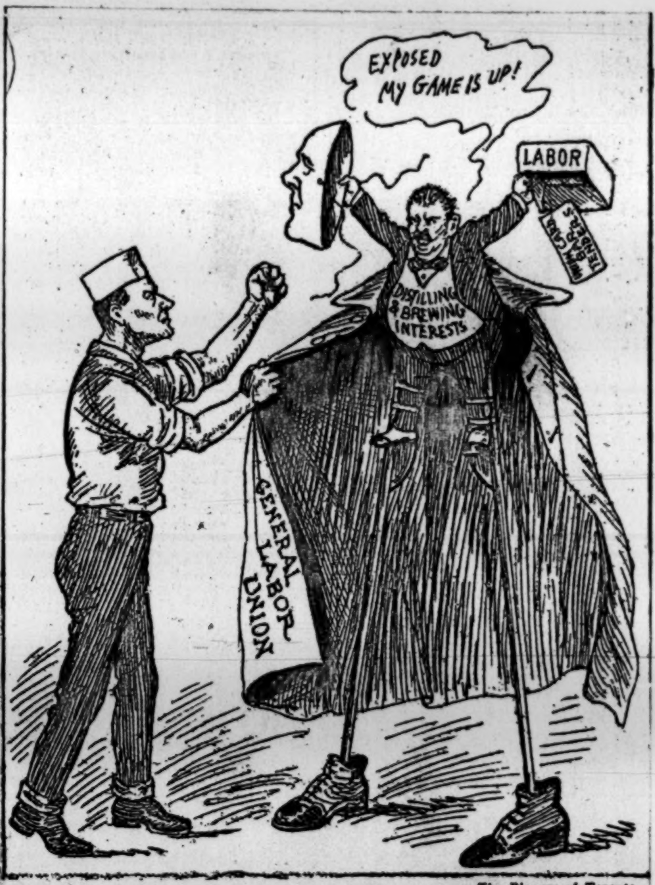
[72] Ibid., p. 116.

[73] Ibid., pp. 1108-1109; 456-457.

[74] Grace Heilman Stimson, Rise of the Labor Movement in Los Angeles (Berkeley and London, 1955), pp. 338-348.

[75] Brewing and Liquor Interests, pp. 316, 484.


EXPOSED MY GAME IS UP!
LABOR
CARD
BAR
TENDERS
DISTILLING & BREWING INTERESTS
GENERAL LABOR UNION

—The Pioneer of Toronto.

The Suspicions of Honest Labor Confirmed

(**The Union Signal**)

petitioned for their support, but only eleven unions considered joining the brewers in the campaign to halt the prohibitionists.[76] The Wet Leagues endorsed candidates and financed local elections in 1914 and 1916 to insure the victory of officials sympathetic to the protection of the brewing industry. Labor's Emergency Liberty League of Washington, D. C., was created as a coordinating agency and a convenient front for the brewers' political activities.[77]

Thousands of workers refused to join or endorse the Wet Leagues, even after the economic threat of prohibition was clearly exploited by the labor press. An Illinois miner complained that the sole object of the leagues was "the protection of the saloon--the curse of the laboring class." Fighting prohibition, he added, was fighting a losing battle: "The saloon is a liar; it promises cheer and gives misery. Booze fools the man who fools with it."[78] In Los Angeles the city's labor newspaper, the Citizen, opposed the California Trade Union Liberty League and refused, with the encouragement of numerous locals, to carry the views of the wets led by the brewery workers and bartenders. The struggle fractured the city labor movement and promoted the establishment of a rival newspaper, the Labor Press.[79] The wet-dry question, one labor journal complained, has become a bone of contention: "The labor movement has enough battles to fight and enough work to do without being harnessed to either the wet or dry wagon."[80] The correspondent for Local No. 97 of the International Bookbinders defended the Hobson Joint Resolution for prohibition and attacked the "rummies" within the union who endorsed the Wet League.[81] Insobriety, abetted by the saloon, was "more of a menace and curse to the laboring man than all other evils combined," he added without reservation.

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[76] Ibid., p. 830. The eleven unions were: the Bartenders, Cigar Makers, Brewery Workers, Coopers, Woodworkers, Musicians, Glass Blowers, Firemen, Engineers, Teamsters, and Horseshoers;

[77] Ibid., p. 318.

[78] The United Mine Workers Journal, December 23, 1915.

Even within some unions normally counted with the wets there were indications of reluctance to join openly with the Wet Leagues in opposition to the prohibitionists. When Cigar Makers' Local No. 22 of Detroit proposed to amend the union's constitution to permit a referendum on the submission of a wet resolution to the AFL convention and the use of paid organizers to campaign against the passage of prohibition laws, the national office described the proposals as "ill-timed and unwise."[82] Admitting that "We have prohibitionists in the trade who are members of the International Union," the officials of the Cigar Makers pointed out that Section 8, Article 3 of the AFL's constitution prohibited partisan political activities by the national body.[83] The cry of the wets, "Safety first--vote wet, forget the drys," was best left to individuals and not the unions.

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[79] Louis B. and Richard S. Perry, A History of the Los Angeles Labor Movement, 1911-1941 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963), p. 114.

[80] The American Pressman, October, 1915.

[81] The International Bookbinder, May, 1914, pp. 229-230.

The Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union cautiously observed the growing success of the prohibitionists between 1907 and 1916 but was unable to duplicate the vigorous response of the International Brewery Workers' Union. Of the union's membership of 60,000 in 1919 only one-third consisted of bartenders. The waiters, waitresses, and other restaurant employees were not committed economically to the preservation of the saloon and the HREB consequently lacked the unity of the Brewery Workers.[84] An additional complication was the large number of Asian-born members who belonged to the West Coast locals and for whom prohibition had little meaning.[85] While the Brewery Workers were able to count on Gompers' continuous support, the leader of the AFL never exerted himself to defend the bartenders or the objectionable reputation of the saloon with which they were associated. The Retail Liquor Dealers Association was more defensive of its image than the USBA and the distilling industry failed to appropriate large sums of money for the use of labor-backed dry campaigns in the industrial states.

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[82] Cigar Makers' Official Journal, April, 1916, pp. 8-9; June, 1916, pp. 2-3.

[83] Ibid., June, 1916, p. 2. Section 8, Article 3 expressly stated that: "Party politics, whether they are Democratic, Republican, Socialistic, Populistic, Prohibition, or any other, shall have no place in the convention of the American Federation of Labor." In fact nothing in the AFL's constitution prevented a discussion or vote on a nonpartisan issue such as prohibition.

[84] Matthew Josephson, Union House, Union Bar: The History of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union, AFL-CIO (New York, 1956), p. 129.

Labor drys were just as active as the Liberty Leaguers between 1914 and the imposition of war-time prohibition. The working men of Omaha organized the Trade Unionists' Anti-Booze League of Nebraska and elected a member of the Typographical Union as president.[86] Dry workers in Ohio established the Workingman's Protective and Publicity Association to counter the propaganda of the Liberty Leagues and T. J. Greer, head of the Louisiana State Federation of Labor, called for the organization of Trade Union Dry Leagues.[87] The workers of Binghamton, New York, established a Trade Union Dry League, while Lodge No. 20 of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel, and Tin Workers of

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[85] Perry and Perry, Los Angeles Labor Movement, p. 40.
[86] The Union Signal, March 30, 1916.
[87] The Union Signal, April 4, 1918.

Middletown, Ohio, passed a resolution declaring their "intention to enlist in the fight to drive the liquor traffic and its influences from the trade union movement."[88]

The drys were well-represented within the leadership ranks of the American Federation of Labor.[89] James B. Duncan, Johnny Mitchell, John B. Lennon, Thomas Lewis, and John F. Cunneen were among the most ardent drys who lent their energies to the prohibition movement. John Lennon, Treasurer of the AFL and members of its Executive Council, lent his support to the drys during the Maine referendum to keep state-wide prohibition in 1911 and continually attacked the saloon before audiences of workers.[90] John Mitchell calmed the fears of many who believed that prohibition spelled economic disaster for thousands of workers. Conversion to a saloon-less society, he told the AFL's Toronto convention in 1909, was a "process well known to trade union men, that is, the readjustment of industry, the same process that followed the introduction of a machine.[91] John F. Cunneen of Illinois, dubbed "the machinist orator," was bitter in his denunciation of the saloon. The saloon was a "murder mill," a "drunkard factory," the "worst enemy" of the laboring man. "Let us conquer the liquor traffic," he urged his fellow workers, "as the Chinese conquered the opium traffic."[92] Internal opposition to a resolution against prohibition was strong enough to forestall official AFL support for the Brewery Workers until 1919.

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[88] The Union Signal, March 21, 1918.

[89] Drescher, "Organized Labor and the Eighteenth Amendment,", p. 288.

[90] The Union Signal, August 31, 1911.

[91] The Union Signal, April 18, 1912; March 20, 1913; December 21, 1911; Calkins, Substitutes for the Saloon, pp. 305-306.

Gompers on Prohibition

Samuel Gompers opposed the enactment of a prohibition law and was particularly adamant in his criticism of the Volstead Act. As a labor leader Gompers counseled voluntary temperance, not total abstinence, and found sumptuary laws contrary to his own personal habits.[93] He was at home in the saloon, loved his beer, and appreciated the fact that saloons were a major outlet for union-made cigars. But he was careful to express his opposition to prohibition as a personal view, or in his capactiy as a labor leader other than president of the American Federation of Labor before the passage of the Volstead Act.[94] Gompers had been interested in the success of unionizing the brewery workers since shortly after his arrival in the United States, and he was determined that the union should not disintegrate.[95]

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[92] The Union Signal, February 1, 1917; April 7, 1918.

[93] Drescher, "Organized Labor and the Eighteenth Amendment," pp. 293-294.

[94] Ibid.

The brewing industry was the most highly organized industry in the United States before 1920.[96] Wages in the industry rose steadily after the Civil War and the old working day of fifteen hours or more, with workers sleeping in the breweries, was shortened as a result of unionization.[97] In 1917 Gompers, as First Vice President of the Cigar Makers, protested the passage of a dry law for the District of Columbia. In a letter to Congressman Ben Johnson of the District of Columbia Committee, Gompers argued that prohibition would affect 100,000 cigar workers adversely, since their products were sold in saloons. In regard to the brewery workers he wrote: "How far-reaching the evil influence of such a piece of legislation would result upon the lives of several millions of workers, directly and indirectly employed in the industry sought to be crushed, surely deserves some consideration...."[98] Four days after he wrote the letter the House passed the District of Columbia prohibition law.

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[95] Gompers, Seventy Years, I, pp. 345, 24.

[96] Wolman, The Growth of Trade Unions, p. 88.

[97] Joseph D. Weeks, U. S. Census Office, Report on the Statistics of Wages (Washington, D. C., 1886), pp. 23-26; Ohio Bureau of Labor Statistics, Twenty-sixth Annual Report (Columbus, 1903); Proceedings, Thirty-eighth Annual Convention, American Federation of Labor, 1918, pp. 23, 29. Hereafter cited as: Proceedings, AFL.

[98] Cigar Makers' Official Journal, April, 1917, p. 11.

When the General Medical Board of the Council of National Defense moved to endorse war-time prohibition Gompers insisted that the wording of two resolutions be changed so that they would not be interpreted as a call for post-war prohibition. He accused the members of the board of selling-out "to the so-called 'social hygienists' and prohibition fanatics, long-haired men and short-haired women."[99] He insisted that the war not be used as an opportunity for a permanent prohibition amendment to the Constitution.

Just before the passage of the Food Control Bill of 1917, which halted the distilling of liquor and authorized the President to prohibit the use of food products in beer and wine, Gompers presented a lengthy petition of protest to President Wilson approved by over 400 local unions. The petition urged the President to exempt beer and wine from the prohibition list, since it was the drink of the American "masses". The Temperance Department of the Federal Council of Churches immediately challenged the petition, noting that there were over 20,000 locals in the United States and 400 represented only a small segment of organized labor.[100]

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[99] As quoted in Bernard Mandel, Samuel Gompers (Yellow Springs, Ohio, 1963), p. 491.

[100] The Union Signal, June 28, 1917; November 29, 1917.

In February, 1918, Samuel Gompers testified before the New York Joint Legislative Committee in Albany during hearings on the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment. Gompers predicted that ratification would thrust an "army" of workers into the ranks of the unemployed.[101] Furthermore, the attacks by drys on Catholics and foreign-born Americans promoted divisiveness at the very moment the war in Europe demanded national unity. William Jennings Bryan spoke for the drys, and the bad feelings aroused by the debate over prohibition between The Commoner and Gompers were never eased.

Under the provisions of war-time prohibition included in the Agricultural Appropriations Act of 1918 the manufacture and importation of intoxicants were banned for the duration of the war and through demobilization. The prohibition of brewing after June 30, 1919, was a devastating blow to the affected unions. Over 1,000 breweries and 170,000 saloons and bars were threatened by the act. The immediate reaction of Gompers was to appeal directly to the President who was known to be sympathetic to the legalization of light wines and beer. Gompers requested a national referendum on limited prohibition with the object of excluding these products from a national prohibition law.

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[101] New York Times, February 27, 1918.

He hoped that a popular vote for beer would strengthen the position of Wilson in dealing with the drys, especially the Southern wing of his party. Gompers did not quarrel with the prohibition of distilled liquor and agreed to the abolition of "the old type of saloon, its family entrance and barroom rail." He abandoned his defense of the liquor interests and concentrated his efforts on saving the brewing industry and its workers if possible. Should beer be completely abolished, Gompers predicted an increase in labor unrest. "Initially," he noted:

> I have found among labor interests a constantly increasing discontent over the possibility of the workingman being denied his glass of beer.... The workingman is accustomed to his beer....If, when July 1 comes, it is taken away from him grave labor unrest will confront the country....[102]

On February 6, 1919, The Essex County, New Jersey, Building Trades Council adopted a "No beer, no work" resolution, and the movement spread quickly to New York where workers threatened to lay down their tools unless beer was exempted from the prohibition law.

By January 16, 1919, the required three-fourths of the states had ratified the Eighteenth Amendment. Wilson's position on the amendment was that of a neutral, but he agreed with Gompers that beer and wines should not be classified as intoxicating beverages.[103] On May 20, 1919, Wilson recommended the repeal of the war-time prohibition of light wines and beer. With the support of Joseph Tumulty, Gompers and Cardinal Gibbons urged the President to lift the ban on beer in 1919 with the completion of demobilization until January, 1920, when the Eighteenth Amendment became law. The AFL passed a resolution to that effect at its 1919 convention, and Tumulty cabled Wilson in France pleading that the President comply: "Workingmen and common people all over the country cannot understand why light wines and beer cannot be permitted until the constitutional amendment becomes effective."[104] Wilson's request for beer and wine legalization failed to gain the consent of Congressional leaders, who were swayed by the contrary argument of the Anti-Saloon League. In 1920 Wilson prepared a wet plank for the Democratic convention in San Francisco to modify the Volstead act to permit beer and wine, but it was never presented for consideration.

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[102] New York Times, June 16, 1919.

The debate on legalizing beer under the Eighteenth Amendment divided the AFL convention of 1919. Resolution No. 5, sponsored by the Brewery Workers' Union and endorsed

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[103] Joseph B. Tumulty, Woodrow Wilson As I Know Him (New York, 1921), p. 409.

[104] *Ibid.*, pp. 418-420.

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by such influential labor representatives as William L. Hutcheson of the Carpenters, Dan Tobin of the Teamsters, and Matthew Woll of the Photo Engraves, demanded "that present mild beers of 2 3/4 per cent alcohol by weight should be exempted from the provisions of the eighteenth amendment."[105] Resolution No. 195, a statement in support of prohibition approved by the Central Labor Council of Seattle, was backed by the drys. "...the right to manufacture and sell booze," the resolution stated, "is neither worth fighting for nor worth having when won."[106] Gompers, characterized by the press as labor's chief wet, gave his support to Resolution No. 5, which passed by a margin of more than 6 to 1.

On June 14, Flag Day, delegates to the Atlantic City convention adjourned under Gompers' leadership to Washington to protest the prohibition of beer and an estimated 10,000 workers, joined by twenty bands, listened to the president of the AFL plead for the legalization of 2.75% beer. "Organized labor," proclaimed Gompers, "does not ask that the right to drink whisky be restored. No one defends whisky drinking. The elemination of spirituous liquor was wise and beneficial."[107] Beer was necessary to relieve the fatigue of the worker and its abolition was unjust and arbitrary. Prohibition was a deliberate violation of the traditional temperance philosophy of the trade union movement, Gompers argued, since it forced those who used intoxicants even moderately to make their own and encouraged wide-spread evasion of the law. Personal liberty, proclaimed an article in the American Federationist, is set back.[108]

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[105] Proceedings, AFL, 1919, p. 193.
[106] Ibid., p. 248.
[107] New York Times, June 15, 1919.

Labor drys were quick to deny that Gompers spoke for the entire American labor movement on the question of prohibition. John Fitzpatrick of the Chicago Federation of Labor, John Lennon, Otto R. Hardwig of the Oregon State Federation of Labor, John L. Donnelly, William C. Thorton, and John F. McNamee, among others, approved of the Eighteenth Amendment and felt no reason to side with Gompers on the issue even at the expense of breaking labor's solidarity on an important economic question.[109] "I do not agree with Mr. Gompers' view on prohibition," wrote McNamee, editor of the Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen's Magazine. "I do not like the idea of recognizing as permanent that status in which working men may find it desirable 'to rush the growler' that beer may constitute a feature of the mid-day cold lunch."[110]

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[108] American Federationist, September, 1919, p. 810; United Mine Workers Journal, August 15, 1918.

[109] The Union Signal, January 17, 1918; April 3, 1919; Proceedings, National Conference of Social Work, 1919, p.768.

[110] The Union Signal, May 6, 1920.

By 1919 plans were already devised to convert the breweries into cold storage plants, packing houses, soft drink plants, ice plants, malt and cereal factories, canneries, creameries, and soap and chemical plants when prohibition became the law of the land.[111] It was hoped that the jobs lost as a result of the Eighteenth Amendment would be absorbed by related, but socially benefical, industries. At the 1919 AFL convention in Atlantic City the Brewery Workers' Union, expecting the worst, changed its name to the International Union of United Brewery, Flour, Cereal and Soft Drink Workers of America, and extended its organizing plans to off-set the decline in membership when the breweries were closed.

The passage of the Volstead Act to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment over Wilson's veto on October 27, 1919, meant that Gompers' worst fears were realized. Despite his efforts, those of the threatened unions, and President Wilson's sympathies, the new enforcement legislation prohibited the manufacture of even 2.75% beer, a light and non-intoxicating beverage in the estimation of millions of workers. The breweries themselves, from simple economic necessity, incited the drys to establish the strict definition of an alcoholic beverage at one-half of one per

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[111] Lindley D. Clark, "Prohibitory Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and Its Relation to Labor," Monthly Labor Review (June, 1919), p. 42.

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cent in the Volstead Act by resuming the manufacture of beer with 2.75% alcoholic content in the last months of 1919 in apparent disregard for the Eighteenth Amendment.[112] While American labor prepared to live with the Eighteenth Amendment in 1920, labor wets were clearly unprepared to accept the permanence of Volsteadism. The working man demanded a legal glass of beer.

Modification

From the advent of Prohibition in January, 1920, until his death on December 13, 1924, in San Antonio, Texas, Samuel Gompers worked strenuously for the modification of the Volstead Act to permit the manufacture of 2.75% beer and light wines. Before legislative committee and noisy crowd, he attacked the supporters of Volsteadism and argued that Prohibition would succeed only when the consumption of non-intoxicating beer was legalized.[113] After a meeting with the Executive Board of the United Brewery Workers in Cincinnati on January 14, 1923, he predicted that angry public resentment with the narrow dogmatism of the Volstead Act would "make America one more the home of the sane and the land of the free."[114] The consumption of mild beer and

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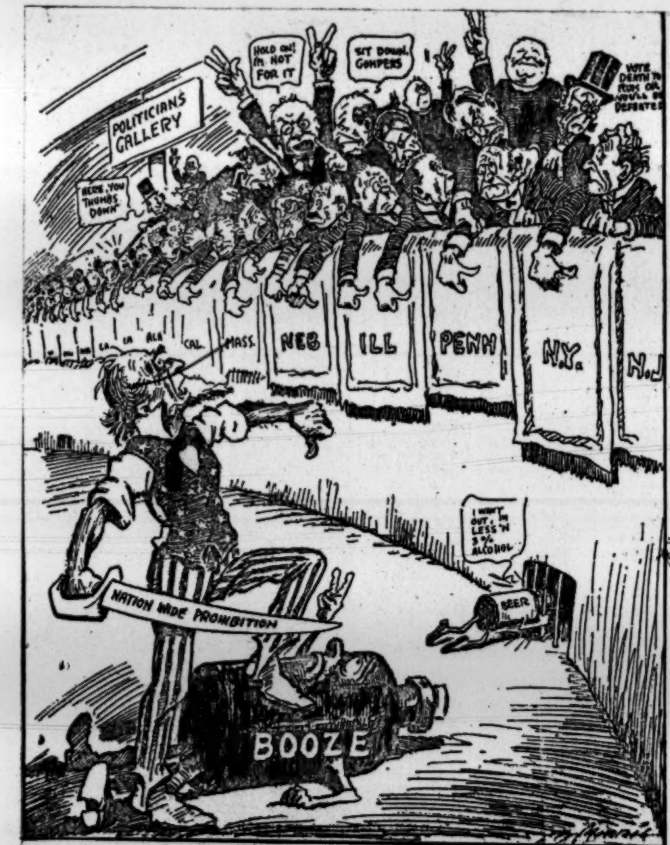
[112] Cherrington, The Evolution of Prohibition, pp. 378-379.

[113] New York Times, March 31, 1920; May 4, 1922; Congressional Record, 68th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 5267-5268.

[114] New York Times, January 15, 1923.


POLITICIANS GALLERY
HOLD ON! I'M NOT FOR IT
SIT DOWN, GOMPERS
VOTE DEATH TO HIM OR YOU'LL BE DEFEATED
HERE, YOU THUMBS DOWN
LA.
IA.
ALA.
CAL.
MASS.
NEB
ILL
PENN
N.Y.
N.J.
I WANT OUT, I'M LESS 'N 3% ALCOHOL
BEER
NATION WIDE PROHIBITION
BOOZE

The Gladiator

—New York Mail

(The Union Signal)

wine, he told the public, was harmless and "would serve many good purposes," not the least of which was the promotion of true temperance. At the same time, he denied that the controlled brewing of mild beer would revive the old-time saloon. "The saloon is an institution of the Dark Ages," he replied to a question. "It is gone forever, and whisky as a beverage also is a thing of the past."[115]

Gompers' public attacks on Volsteadism were buttressed by the main contention that the Volstead Act was a "misinterpretation" of the Eighteenth Amendment.[116] The sentiment behind the ratification of the amendment was essentially anti-saloon, in his view, and not anti-beer. The drys, by political pressure and the threat of reprisal, forced the passage of an act which embodied fanatical views at variance with popular feelings as expressed in the ratification sessions on the Eighteenth Amendment. By liberalizing the definition of alcoholic beverage to permit light beverages the proper intent of the nation might still be realized. Wayne B. Wheeler, the general counsel of the Anti-Saloon League, rejected Gompers' argument and challenged the president of the AFL to attempt to swing labor's vote in favor of modification.[117] A large part of American labor, as indicated by the support of the Locomotive Engineers and the other rail unions for Prohibition, would not follow Gompers back to the barroom, or allow "brewery control of labor union policies."

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[115] Ibid.
[116] New York Times, June 8, 1923.
[117] New York Times, August 5, 1914.

The efforts of Gompers to secure the modification of the Volstead Act were sustained and encouraged by interested wets within and without the labor movement. In regard to the Volstead Act, one labor journal observed, "the sooner it is repealed or amended, or a new bill substituted for it, the better it will be for all concerned."[118] In 1922 the Boston Central Labor Union appealed to him to continue his fight for the legalization of mild beer and light wines.[119] Gompers spoke against Volsteadism in the company of representatives from the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment(AAPA) and maintained his ties with the old Liberty Leaguers from across the nation.[120] Within the AFL wets organized the League for the Modification of the Volstead Act, headed by Matthew Woll, and joined with other wets in organizations such as the American Liberties League in an attempt to reverse Volsteadism.[121] In New York City the wets controlled the Central Trades and Labor Council and intimidated the drys to the point of silence.

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[118] American Marine Engineer, December, 1922, pp. 9-10.

[119] New York Times, April 17, 1922.

[120] New York Times, April 22, 1924.

[121] Lewis L. Lorwin, The American Federation of Labor: Histories, Policies, and Prospects, AMS Reprint, (New York, 1970), p. 338; Justice, July 8, 1921.

Between 1920 and 1923 labor drys were active in their defense of Prohibition and did not feel compelled to apologize for the enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment. A popular survey conducted by The Literary Digest in 1920 found that 345 labor leaders of 526 who responded thought Prohibition a definite benefit to the American worker, although some expressed reservations.[122] Only 31 labor spokesmen expressed open doubts on the benefits of the new experiment. The rail brotherhoods were steadfast in their adherence to Prohibition. Warren S. Stone of the BLE and L. E. Sheppard of the Railroad Conductors expressed satisfaction with the amendment and its enforcement legislation.[123] They were joined by D. B. Robertson of the Locomotive Firemen and W. G. Lee of the Trainmen, so that the powerful rail unions constituted the greatest single bloc of drys in organized labor.

As determined supporters of the Eighteenth Amendment the leaders of the rail unions opposed any movement for the modification of the Volstead Act. "I know Mr. Gompers very well and have talked with him and know his views on this subject," remarked Sheppard of the Order of Railroad Conductors, "and I do not agree with him that organized labor is in favor of any modification or repeal of the

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[122] The Literary Digest, March 13, 1920, pp. 13-15.
[123] The Literary Digest, June 23, 1923, pp. 32-33.

Volstead Act."[124] Richard T. Jones, of the Labor Department's Employment Service, noted in 1923 that "rumblings of dissatisfaction with Mr. Gomper's repeated attacks on prohibition are heard in the hustings, and any attempt by the wet element to urge the Federation to go on record against the Eighteenth Amendment is certain to be strongly opposed."[125]

A number of unions maintained an open attitude on Prohibition and its enforcement early in the decade, but as the failures of the national and state governments in enforcement became more apparent, the movement for modification gathered strength. When a resolution to modify the Volstead Act to permit the manufacture of 2.75% beer was introduced at the 1921 convention of the National Association of Letter Carriers, the delegates voted to table the motion indefinitely.[126] "That sphinx whose name is society surely has a right to suppress even the 'personal freedom' of drinking," commented an editorial in the journal of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.[127] A member of another union wrote that: "If prohibition will bring about analytic and constructive thinking that will raise humanity out of the rut of hypocrisy, chicanery, and ignorance, it is well."[128] If not, he added, the worker might as well die drunk as sober in the mine and the mill.

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[124] Ibid., p. 32.

[125] Richard T. Jones, "The Wet Drive and the A. F. of L.," The New Republic, 35(June 6, 1923), p. 41.

[126] The Postal Record, October, 1921, pp. 293-294.

[127] Justice, July 8, 1921.

The enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment after 1923 renewed the old belief that Prohibition was discriminatory, with the poor harassed by state and federal officials while the rich evaded the law.[129] Volsteadism was the imposition of law by social class, observed *The Coast Seaman's Journal*. "In the United States the triumph of prohibition is a class triumph. The rich may and do drink, and there is much reason to believe that they drink more under prohibition than they drank before it."[130] Even the comic exploits of Izzy and Moe, Prohibition's contribution to vaudevillian humor, failed to lighten the conviction that working men bore the brunt of the dry laws.[131] Increasing bitterness nutured a conspiratorial theory of the origins and enactment of Volsteadism. The favorite figures of the conspiracy were the "strict" church people, the farmer who was "forever ready to spite the city folk," and the Big Business interests.[132] Behind these figures were the boot-

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[128] *The Bricklayer, Mason and Plasterer*, January, 1921, p. 15.

[129] *The Shoe Workers' Journal*, March, 1920, pp. 16-17; *The Paper Makers' Journal*, April-June, 1925, pp. 11-12; *The Coast Seamen's Journal*, December, 1925, pp. 360-361.

[130] *The Coast Seamen's Journal*, April, 1924, pp. 109-110.

[131] *Justice*, March 30, 1923, p. 7.

[132] *Ibid.*; *The Advance*, October 15, 1926.

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legger and the politician who reaped the true profits from Prohibition and had every economic reason to support its continuation.

One of the most consistent criticisms of Volsteadism voiced in the labor press was that Prohibition had destroyed the real meaning of temperance. "Prohibition has done away with temperance and temperance societies," wrote a member of the Bookbinders, "and in their stead put the flask in the hip pockets of our men and boys...."[133] "There is no relation betwen the 'enforcement' sought by the fanatics and true temperance. The two are far apart," The Garment Worker commented at the end of the decade.[134] The Eighteenth Amendment, with its enforcement, a member of the Railway Clerks observed, had destroyed temperance and made criminals and hypocrites of ninety million people.[135] But the Garment Workers' journal best expressed labor's general frustration with the displacement of temperance by Volsteadism when it noted that: "The whole prohibition enforcement business is a mess, a muddle, a farce, travesty and tragedy, all rolled up in one indigestible pill."[136]

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[133] The International Bookbinder, September, 1928, p. 500; January, 1927, p. 34; Justice, May 21, 1926; The Railway Clerk, April, 1931, p. 170.

[134] The Garment Worker, August 2, 1929.

[135] The Railway Clerk, December, 1930, p. 538.

[136] The Garment Worker, August 2, 1929.

During its annual conventions in the 1920s the American Federation of Labor called unceasingly for the modification of the enforcement legislation to the Eighteenth Amendment. Criticism of the dry laws was carefully focused on the Volstead Act, and not the dry amendment itself. In 1921 the annual convention approved Resolution No. 69 which declared "in favor of modification of the Volstead Law so as to permit the manufacture and sale of a national beverage of wholesome beer...."[137] "Many of our people," the resolution explained, "were of the impression that with the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment it would not exclude the nation's national beverage...beer...."[138] Similar resolutions were introduced by the New York State Federation of Labor and the Pavers and Asphalt Workers' Union, and neither attacked the Eighteenth Amendment.[139]

In 1922 the Executive Council of the AFL, following the instructions of the last convention to investigate the effects of the Volstead Act, issued a public declaration in favor of the modification of the Volstead law. Volsteadism had produced a nation of law-breakers, thousands of urban moonshiners, an army of bootleggers, a plethora of of deadly liquor concoctions, unemployment, increased taxes, and a rapid rise in insanity and blindness.[140] Reflecting the strong views of Gompers, who shaped the drafting of the statement, the declaration maintained that the Volstead Act was "an improper interpretation of the prohibition amendment:"

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[137] Proceedings, AFL, 1921, p. 228.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid., pp. 232-233, 249.

> We do not protest against the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which now is a part of the fundamental law of the land. We do not protest against the principle established by the Eighteenth Amendment. It is our contention, that the Eighteenth Amendment, under a reasonable and proper legislative interpretation, would be beneficial to our country, and would have the support of the great majority of the people.[141]

The "reasonable interpretation" of the Eighteenth Amendment demanded by labor was clearly understood to mean the legalization of 2.75% beer and light wines. The declaration was approved with out division at the 1923 convention as the official position of the AFL on Volsteadism.[142]

William Green, who succeeded Gompers as the president of the American Federation of Labor, continued the national drive for modification. In 1925 he requested President Coolidge to send a recommendation for modification of the Volstead Act to Congress for immediate consideration.[143]

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[140] The Postal Record, April, 1922, pp. 96-97.

[141] Ibid., p. 97; The Literary Digest, March 25, 1922, p. 14.

[142] Proceedings, AFL, 1923, p. 324.

[143] Proceedings, AFL, 1927, p. 92.

A year later the resolutions of previous conventions demanding the replacement of the strict definition of an alcoholic beverage in the Volstead Act were sent to the Judiciary Committee of the Senate, which in 1926 considered a number of repeal and modification proposals.[144] In the letter of transmittal to the committee, the AFL's Executive Council emphasized that the movement for modification was not to be misinterpreted as a protest against the Eighteenth Amendment.[145]

The sudden impact of the Great Depression precipitated the first serious debate on the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment at the 1930 convention of the American Federation of Labor. Resolution No. 29, introduced by the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Beverage Dispensers' (formerly the Bartenders) International Alliance, demanded the immediate modification of the Volstead Act "antecedent to the ultimate and entire repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States."[146] The hard times of the Depression gave the argument for repeal a sense of economic urgency, for the resumption of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages promised to create thousands of new jobs and millions of dollars in federal revenues to combat the effects of reduced wages and unemployment. Nevertheless, the Committee on Resolutions refused to endorse Resolution No. 29 and recommended approval of the Executive Committee's report in favor of modification. Despite the allurement of jobs and tax revenues which Repeal implied, the AFL's convention refused to abandon the position of 1922 in favor of altering the Volstead Act: "...the Executive Council wishes to state clearly that it is in no way demanding the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States."[147] The Hotel and Restaurant and Beverage Dispensers' Alliance, led by Edward Flore, was disappointed by the refusal of the convention to demand Repeal and resubmitted the resolution the following year, but with the same result.[148]

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[144] *Ibid.*

[145] *Ibid.*, p. 93.

[146] *Proceedings*, AFL, 1930, pp. 129-130. A similar resolution was introduced by the Providence Central Federated Union; Resolution No. 4, p. 20.

Labor's demand for modification was bolstered by leading clergymen and businessmen from 1930 to 1933. Father John A. Ryan, who at first looked upon the Prohibition experiment with sympathy and some hope, changed his mind by the end of the decade and urged Congress to legalize 2.75% beer.[149] Father Ryan, who voiced the views of many workers, objected to the class nature of the enforcement of Prohibition as especially oppressive:

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[147] Ibid., p. 115.

[148] Proceedings, AFL, 1931, p. 173.

[149] U. S., Congress, The House Judiciary Committee, The Prohibition Amendment, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 266-267.

> The members of the superior classes who think of prohibition as bringing to the wage earners greater comforts, but who ignore its effects upon the workers' freedom are implicitly advocating a system of industrial feudalism or industrial serfdom.[150]

As with almost all critics of the Volstead Act within the labor movement, Father Ryan opposed the return of the saloon and even suggested a dispensary system similar to the Canadian system to curb the abuse of intemperance in a reasonable fashion.

Pierre S. Du Pont, whose addresses and writings were circulated by the AAPA, defended the right of the working man to visit the saloon and regulate his own consumption of intoxicants.[151] The president of the Pennsylvania Railroad recommended the repeal of the Volstead Act and noted that the word "habitual" had been dropped from Rule G, which prohibited intoxication and saloon-haunting, of the company's work rules.[152] The Moderation League, whose

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[150] *Ibid.*, p. 270; see also John A. Ryan, *Questions of the Day*, Reprint edition, (Freeport, New York, 1967), pp., 20, 39, 50.

[151] U. S., Congress, Senate, Senate Document No. 307, *Official Records of the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement*, 71st Congress, 3rd Session, (Washington, D. C., 1931), V, pp. 187-195, 307-311. Hereafter cited as: *Wickersham Report*.

[152] House Judiciary Committee, *Prohibition*, p. 317.

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board of directors included one prominent labor leader, James Holland of the the New York State Federation of Labor, aided the modification drive by gathering evidence of the failures of enforcement under the Volstead law.

The only systematic attempt to ascertain labor's views on Volsteadism was made by the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, the Wickersham Commission.[153] The eleven members of the commission were appointed by President Herbert Hoover in 1929, with former Attorney General George W. Wickersham selected to head the commission. Wickersham was closely associated with the Federal Council of Churches, which endorsed Prohibition and had cooperated with the Anti-Saloon League to secure the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment. During the months in which the commission received testimony on the operation of the Volstead Act, numerous labor spokesmen appeared on behalf of their unions to complain of the unreasonable interpretation of an alcoholic beverage in the Volstead Act. Without exception they requested the legalization of "wholesome" beer and protested the possible return of the saloon.[154] The AFL was invited to submit brief in support of its demand for modification, which it did in 1930.

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[153] The Garment Worker, March 15, 1929; The Advance, December 26, 1930.

[154] Wickersham Report, III, passim.

The AFL's brief was presented by William ~~C.~~ Roberts, chairman of the Legislative Committee of the American Federation of Labor. The brief began with the modification statement of 1922 and summarized the modification resolutions adopted at the national conventions between 1919 and 1927. It was the AFL's contention "that the manufacture, sale, and distribution of wholesome beer would bring about real temperance."[155] The brief drew attention to the economic consequences of modification which, if approved by Congress, could create new jobs for unemployed working men.[156] "And in the name of the American Federation of Labor," Roberts' statement concluded, "I sincerely urge that the committee recommend to the House a bill providing for the manufacture, sale, and distribution of wholesome, nonintoxicating beer containing 2.75 per cent alcohol by weight."[157] The brief did not plead for the resumption of the distilling of hard spirits or the restoration of the saloon; both questions were treated to strict silence.

Individual labor leaders testifying before the Wickersham Commission included Andrew Furuseth of the Seamen's Union, John B. Haggerty from the Bookbinders, Arthur Wharton from the Machinists, and the representatives of the major trades departments of the AFL. It was their collec-

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[155] Ibid, pp. 104-107.
[156] Ibid., p. 107.
[157] Ibid.

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tive opinion that Prohibition did not contribute substantially to the prosperity of the worker, and that where wages and working condtions were improved over the conditions of 1920, it was the result of technological change. They agreed unanimously that the American worker did not want the revival of the old-time saloon. William J. Spencer of the Building Trades Department of the AFL told the commission that he could find no evidence to suggest that workers favored the rebirth of the saloon, and the resumption of brewing was not to be equated with a pro-saloon movement.[158] James Egan of the AFL's Weekly News Service explained that workers opposed the saloon, not only for economic reasons, but also because it a crucial aspect of the political machine. It was his opnion, Egan added, "that the saloon and allied interests were invariably linked up in legislative lobbies with the long-coat and high-hat seekers of privilege and opponents of social legislation."[159] The spokesmen for the trade unions, like the AFL's brief, urged the Wickersham Commission to recommend the manufacture of mild beer. No one argued the case for the distillers or the bar-tenders.[160]

President William Green appealed personally to George

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[158] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.
[159] *Ibid.*, p. 111.
[160] *Ibid.*, pp. 31-311.

Wickersham to consider a recommendation for modification, arguing that the resumption of brewing would stimulate not only that industry but the allied industries as well. Modification would stir the flagging economies in coal mining, railroading, the metal trades, glass blowing, and agriculture.[161] At the same time, however, Green continued his opposition to the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. Outright Repeal would not add substantially to the number of new jobs over simple modification, and the resumption of the distilling of hard spirits posed a severe threat to temperance. The manufacture of non-intoxicating beer would "pacify the great mass of our people and make possible the enforcement of the eighteenth amendment against hard liquor," Green wrote.[162]

The failure of the Wickersham Commission to recommend modification forced the American labor movement to dispair of ever altering the Volstead Act.[163] The refusal of the commission to respond to the pleas for modification contributed directly to the failure of the Eighteenth Amendment. The worsening economic conditions of 1931-1932 gave to the advocates of Repeal a major argument which the modification forces found impossible to ignore. The resumption of brewing, wine-making, distilling, and saloon-keeping meant jobs. Repeal suddenly became an enchanting formula for relieving the diastrous aftermath of 1929.

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[161] The Congressional Record, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 1030-1031.

[162] Ibid.

[163] The vote by the members of the Wickersham Commission was: five for modification, four to retain enforcement, and two for repeal. Modification failed by a single vote.

Repeal

The American labor movement abandoned the doctrine of modification in favor of Repeal between 1931 and 1932. In 1931 the convention of the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks voted down a resolution for Repeal and approved Resolution No. 63 requesting only the modification of the Volstead Act.[164] The Garment Worker urged workers in the clothing industry to back modfication by demanding the passage of the O'Connor-Hull Beer Bill in 1932, which it predicted would create one million new jobs.[165] Volsteadism, the journal proclaimed several months later, is doomed.[166] The AFL convention of 1931 voted solidily in favor of modification and against a Repeal resolution backed by the Hotel and Restaurant Employees.[167]

The shift to Repeal began in 1932. The economic argument for Repeal was advanced cautiously by the trade unions in a circumspect fashion, with the clear understanding that the resumption of the manufacture and consumption of alcoholic beverages would not in itself end the Depression and restore prosperity. But Repeal was at least a beginning. "...the modification or repeal of the 18th Amendment is the first step to the restoration of normalcy," wrote Joseph Denny of the Bookbinders.[168] The journal of the Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers argued that the resumption of brewing should not be considered a cure for all the problems of unemployment.[169] An editorial in the International Teamster cautioned that a repeal of all the dry laws would not provide millions of jobs for idle workers: "On the contrary, it will be a slow recovery, because several of the states will not permit the sale of beer and it will be so controlled that only hotels and first-class restaurants will be allowed to sell for consumption on the premises."[170] On May 14, 1932, Mayor James J. Walker of New York led the "Beer for Taxation" parade in which 25,000 workers marched for the restoration of legalized intoxicants.

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[164] Proceedings, Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees, 1931, pp. 408-409.

[165] The Garment Worker, April 1, 1932.

[166] The Garment Worker, July 1, 1932.

[167] Proceedings, AFL, 1931, p. 413.

The economic argument for Repeal stressed three direct benefits for the alleviation of the hard times of the Depression. First, Repeal meant the restoration of thousands of jobs in the brewing and distilling industries; the traditional allied trades would add additional workers to meet the demands for grain, glass, barrels, and transportation. Second, the Federal Government would recover an important source of tax revenue, worth millions annually, which could be used to finance relief and recovery programs to reduce unemployment. Third, the heavy expenditures paid out by the state and national governments to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment would no longer be necessary, freeing additional millions of dollars for anti-depression programs. Depite some exaggerated claims that Repeal would create jobs for 2,500,00 workers and provide hundreds of millions for relief, most labor leaders refused to attach such lofty hopes to the ending of Prohibition.

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[168] The International Bookbinder, June, 1932, pp. 166-168.

[169] Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers' Journal, April, 1932, p. 2.

[170] International Teamster, August, 1932, pp. 10-12.

It was not until the convention of 1932 that the Repealers were able to carry a majority of the AFL delegates with them. The Democratic convention in June adopted a Repeal plank, paving the way for the debate on Repeal at AFL's convention in November. The debate on the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment divided the convention into two factions, the Repealers led by Vice President Matthew Woll and the Modificationists led by President William Green. The report of the Executive Council recommended only modification of the Volstead Act to promote the cause of temperance and open employment to thousands of workers.[171] A Repeal resolution was sponsored by the Hotel and Restaurant Workers, which William Green opposed. The Building Trades Department of the AFL announced its support for immediate modification, but not Repeal, to spur the decline in building construction. M. S. McDonough argued that the reopening of the breweries would spark a much-needed demand for stone, brick, cement, wood, metal, and machinery and engineers.[172] The San Francisco Labor Council urged modification to permit light wines as well as beer to continue the prosperity of the state's grape-growers and related industries.[173] The delegates from the Coopers' Union demanded the restoration of draught beer, the "workman's beverage," to reopen 1,000 closed cooperage shops.[174] But the Committee on Resolutions, chaired by Matthew Woll, went even further and recommended the immediate modification of the Volstead Act to be followed by the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment;

> What America needs now is the speediest possible return to sanity. We urge the immediate modification of the Volstead Act to permit the manufacture, transport and sale of wholesome, palatable

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[171] Proceedings, AFL, 1932, p. 71.
[172] Ibid., p. 138.
[173] Ibid., p. 145.
[174] Ibid., p. 171.

> beverages, non-intoxicating in fact, and we recommend repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment as rapidly as that can be brought about.[175]

Woll also recommended that all regulatory powers governing the consumption of intoxicants be returned to the states, so that those areas which wished to remain dry might do so.

The resolution was opposed by those who felt that Prohibition was a moral or religious question and had no place in the proceedings of the convention.[176] Charles P. Howard of the Typographical Union, who was a member of the Resolutions Committee, protested the endorsement of Repeal on the grounds that 25,000,000 unemployed workers who could not afford to buy bread were now told that they should buy beer.[177] Even the virtually extinct Brewery Workers' Union asked only for the modification of the Volstead law.

Woll's case for Repeal was couched in political ideals and did not raise false hopes of prosperity. The "principles of home government," he argued, dictated the return of the police powers to state and community control; the national government had no right "to legislate all our habits, our customs and relationships."[178] His appeal to political liberties was designed to win the widest possible support and alienate no one.

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[175] *Ibid.*, p. 365.
[176] *Ibid.*, pp. 366-368.
[177] *Ibid.*, p. 366.
[178] *Ibid.*, p. 367.

William Green spoke for the Modificationists. He argued the rapidly-wanning cause of modification through the months preceding the November convention. In June during a radio speech from the CBS studio at the Democratic national convention he urged the convention delegates to support the legalization of beer "as a source of governmental revenue."[179] He proposed that the Federal Government issue five billion dollars in bonds for public works and employment programs, with the revenue from the beer tax set aside to retire the bonds. Modification would rejuvenate the brewing industry and support public works projects such as reforestation, flood control, and the construction of public buildings. From an economic point of view, then, there was no need for Repeal, which would only reintroduce hard liquor and the saloon.

The semi-annual meeting of the Executive Council of the AFL, at Green's urging, voted to oppose the use of federal funds for enforcement of the Volstead Act while the Depression was worsening.[180] The council endorsed modification because it was the only solution to the liquor problem which advanced the cause of true temperance. Legal beer meant jobs, and jobs, Green noted, were better than relief.

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[179] New York Times, June 27, 1932.

[180] New York Times, July 18, 1932.

In the debate on the Repeal resolution in the convention President Green refused to abandon his stand in support of modification, or weaken his opposition to the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment.

> ...I think it unwise and inadvisable for this convention to go as far as the committee proposes, that is, to declare itself in favor of a repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. I say that because we represent all shades of opinion upon this question. The men and women of labor themselves are divided upon it, and every one of them are entitled to their opinion upon this question.[181]

The modification of the Volstead Act to permit the legalization of 2.75% beer, and that only, was in strict keeping with the long-standing desire of organized labor "to promote temperance and to promote sobriety."

Modification was a reasonable proposal, but hard times offered little solace to the advocates of reason. Without further serious debate on the question, the convention voted to approve the resolution of Matthew Woll to repeal the Eighteenth Amendment.

The Repeal plank adopted by the Democratic convention in Chicago during June demanded the return of all sumptuary controls to the state governments, cautioned against the revival of the nineteenth-century saloon, and, pending Repeal, sanctioned modification to permit the manufacture of beer and wine to provide "a proper and needed revenue."[182] Labor's demand for beer, the workman's beverage, was at long last recognized, but Repeal meant the resumption of distilling and saloon-keeping, two demands that organized labor never made during even the most trying years of living with the Volstead Act.

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[181] Proceedings, AFL, 1932, p. 370.

As Governor of New York, Franklin D. Roosevelt called for the repeal of the dry amendment and the return of sumptuary responsibility to the state governments.[183] In 1932, however, he refused to treat Prohibition as a major issue of the campaign or the election.[184] On March 13, 1933, he recommended to Congress that the Volstead Act be modified to permit beer and wine consumption, in keeping with the constitutional provisions of the dry amendment, to provide needed revenues for governmental programs.[185] The passage of the Beer-Wine Revenue Act on March 22, 1933, which relegalized wine and 3.2% beer(not even the 2.75% beer urged by labor!), and the rapid approval of beer laws by the states took Roosevelt by surprise. By October forty-one states and the District of Columbia had approved the manufacture and sale of beer. The haste with which the states resumed the consumption of beer was due in part to the persistent agitation on the issue by the American labor movement after 1919.

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[182] The Literary Digest, July 9, 1932; August 20, 1932, pp. 33-34.

[183] The Literary Digest, September 20, 1930, p. 8.

[184] Rexford G. Tugwell, The Democratic Roosevelt: A Biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Pelican Books, (Baltimore, 1969), p. 185.

[185] The Congressional Record, 73rd Congress, 1st

Roosevelt, who had not expected the Repeal drive to gather steam until 1934, announced on December 5th that the thirty-sixth state had ratified the Twenty-first Amendment repealing Prohibition.[186] His proclamation of Repeal asked that "no State shall by law or otherwise authorize the return of the saloon in its old form or in some modern guise."[187] Temperance had triumphed over Prohibition. "The objective we seek through a national policy is the education of every citizen towards a greater temperance throughout the nation," he told a thirsty as well as a hungry country.[188] Availability, but temperance, was the little new deal for America's liquor problem. The over-turning of the Old Order carried with it the Eighteenth Amendment.

The American labor movement joined the drive for Repeal in 1932, driven to the point only then by more than a decade of frustration in trying to modify the Volstead

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Session, pp. 243, 284.

[186] Herbert Feis, 1933: Characters in Crisis (Boston, 1966), p. 331.

[187] New York Times, December 6, 1933.

[188] Ibid.

Act. In 1933 the Hotel and Restaurant Employees thanked the AFL for its "loyal and effective" support in the restoration of legalized intoxicants, quickly forgetting the opposition to the revival of the saloon voiced by organized labor for more than a decade.[189] Prohibition was over, but the prosperity that returned briefly was illusory. While the stock of Canada Dry, National Distillers, Schenley, and Standard Brands floated slightly on the New York Stock Exchange, the anticipated jobs for idle workers did not materialize. In 1933 the worker had his beer, but he still worried over his loaf of bread. The tax revenues generated by the manufacture of alcoholic beverages could not finance the New Deal.

If the enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment had recognized the consumption of mild beer and light wines there is no doubt that organized labor would have been content to live with the dry amendment. But in 1933 the doctrine of working-class sobriety, based on temperance, jubilantly replaced Volsteadism. Even the railroad brotherhoods, who for years were so deeply committed to the cause of sobriety, failed to mourn the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment. The experiment in national Prohibition was over.

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[189] __Proceedings__, AFL, 1933, p. 154.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The transformation of the agricultural laborer into the industrial worker was marked by continuities as well as readjustments, by the retention of old values and the adoption of new patterns of life. The long-revered custom of tippling was commonly enjoyed on the least of social occasions by American and European workers who recalled ceremonies and usages in the nineteenth century that were as old as the guild celebrations of the medieval artisan. The agricultural laborer, unrestrained by the social and economic discipline of the machine-oriented society, imbibed freely with little apparent concern for himself, his family, or the morrow. But the rise of an industrialized society reduced intemperance to a social evil, and for the industrial worker drunkenness became a direct threat to his job and an obstacle to his upward social mobility. In order to improve his social standing and to enhance his value in the eyes of his employer, the American worker in the course of the nineteenth century increasingly ascribed to the doctrine of working-class sobriety and devoted his energies to the cultivation of the virtues of the sober workman.

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Beginning with the National Labor Union in 1866, labor journals and associations of mechanics stressed the economic benefits of sobriety and cautioned workers of the hidden dangers in frequenting the saloon. The doctrine of temperance was deeply entrenched in the railroad brotherhoods during the 1870s and thereafter. The rail unions preached the virtues of industry and temperance, and cautioned their members to shun intoxicants under the threat of suspension or expulsion from the brotherhood. Saloon-keepers were expelled from the rail unions and denied readmission until they severed all ties with the liquor traffic.

The Knights of Labor continued the temperance drive of the railroad brotherhoods and the policy of excluding saloon-keepers and owners. For Terence V. Powderly the promotion of sobriety was one of the major obligations of the organized labor movement. As Grand Master Workman he took the lead in urging workers to abstain from all intoxicants and he used the authority of his office to enforce the expulsion of known inebriate workers from the Knights of Labor. Powderly's commitment to temperance reform led into a widening nexus of social reformers which included the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and, momentarily, the Populists.

The American Federation of Labor, unlike the Knights of Labor, allowed individual trade unions to enforce temperance requirements in keeping with the traditions of the craft. Samuel Gompers, however, opposed the passage of sumptuary legislation which infringed upon the worker's right to purchase and consume beer, the working man's beverage, even though he refused to defend the practices of the saloon which angered and inflamed social critics of the urban political machine and its ally, the saloonkeeper.

Organized labor accepted war-time prohibition as necessary for national defense, but in doing so it was clear that the worker objected to its permanent imposition after the return of peace in Europe. The ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment, without the enforcement legislation embodied in the Volstead Act, was not viewed as a social or economic threat to the labor movement, since the amendment itself did not preclude the consumption of beer. The passage of the Volstead Act, however, threatened the Brewery Workers' and Bartenders' unions with extinction and deprived the worker of his favorite intoxicating beverage. Gompers and William Green, his successor as president of the AFL, launched a national drive to secure the modification of the Volstead Act to permit the manufacture of 2.75% beer and light wines under the constitutional limitations of the Eighteenth Amendment.

In the drive to modify the enforcement of Prohibition, Gompers, Green, and other labor leaders refused to call for the revival of the old-time saloon or to demand the restoration of distilled spirits. As late as 1931 it was quite clear that organized labor would continue to accept the Eighteenth Amendment if the production of beer were resumed to stimulate industries adversely affected by the Depression. When Congress and President Hoover refused to endorse Modification, resentment mounted for the repeal of all prohibitory laws in conjunction with the general over-turning of the Old Order following the presidential election of 1932. The resumption of brewing, distilling, and saloon-keeping in 1933 exceeded the demands of labor and implied a return to the patterns of alcoholic consumption of pre-1914 America.

In the controversy surrounding the liquor question from the Civil War to 1933 the American labor movement remained firm in its dedication to the principles of temperance and sobriety. Trade unions and the larger labor movement urged their members to forsake the saloon and to abstain from the habitual use of intoxicants. While the saloon was often depicted as the poor man's parlor or club, the worker wasted little time in mourning its passing during the Prohibition "experiment" of the 1920s. If the ambience of the saloon attracted the worker, as an economic institution it exploited him. The implications of the exploitative nature of the liquor traffic were not lost on the men and women who comprised the leadership of the American labor movement.

The appeal of temperance reform transcended the simple dichotomy of rural versus urban America, for groups which were both urban and industrial saw in the temperance ideal a means to economic and social advancement. Job security, mobility, and acceptance by employers made temperance an important social value in the life of the worker. Industrial society demanded workers who were disciplined, efficient, and sober. The repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment permitted American trade unions to resume the old temperance policy based on the voluntaristic appeal to sobriety.

APPENDIX I

ADDRESS OF THE PRESTON MECHANICS, 1834[1]

"TIPPLERS, DRUNKARDS, AND BACKSLIDERS!

Friends!--You are miserable and wretched, both in body, soul and circumstances; your families and friends are suffering through your folly; you have no peace here, and can have no peace hereafter; and all this proceeds from the delusive, maddening habit of drinking intoxicating liquors. You are told that these liquors do you good. *It is a flasehood, invented and propagated for the purpose of getting your money*. Judge of the good they have done, by the *effects* which they have produced upon yourselves and others. Oh! shun the public house as you would do a plague, and the company of drunkards as you would a gang of robbers.

Friends!--We were once drunkards, and most of us were in the same wretched condition as yourselves; but being reclaimed, we are anxious for you to enjoy the same liberty and blessings which we enjoy. *We are now happy*; our wives are comfortable; our children are provided for; we are better in health, better in circumstances; we have peace of mind; and no tongue can tell the comfort we have enjoyed since we became consistent members of the Temperance Society. Ale and strong drink have slain more than war or pestilence; and while we refuse no kind of food or drink which God hath sent, we abstain from all diluted poison, manufactured to ruin mankind, and to rob our country of its greatness. We have seen our delusion, and we now drink neither ale, wine, gin, rum nor brandy, nor any kind of intoxicating liquor. There is no safety for you nor us but in giving it up entirely. Come forward, then, ye tipplers, drunkards and backsliders! attend our meetings, and be resolved to cast off the fetters of intemperance; and once and for ever determine to be free."[2]

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[1] *Permanent Temperance Documents*, Vol. I, pp. 485-486.

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[2] The occupations of the thirty mechanics and artisans who signed the Address were as follows: weavers(3), joiner (1), fishmonger(1), spinners(5), tailor(1), plasterers(2), mechanics(3), sizer(1), sawyer(1), shoemakers(2), mole-catcher(1), moulders(3), clogger(1), broker(1), roller maker(1), cabinet maker(1), and shopkeeper(1).

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APPENDIX II

"THE SOBER ENGINEER"[1]

You have read my temperance speech,
  Now I'll sing you a little song,
Please give me your attention,
  I'll not detain you long;
I will sing about a gentleman,
  Who travels without fear,
For such is my opinion
  Of the railroad engineer.

Chorus.--Oh! the sober engineer,
  The careful engineer,
There is no one more trustworthy
  Than the Sober Engineer.

He mounts on his foot-board--
  Oh! this is his throne--
And leaves far behind him,
  Those loved ones at home.
But, list to that shrill whistle!
  The train it does appear--
Oh! don't cry my darlings,
  For pa will soon be here.

Chorus.--

Now, to the trav'ling public,
  This much I have to say:
As you are seated in the palace car,
  Be it in the night or day,
There is one thing I can tell you--
  I say it without fear--
You place your life, to a great extent,
  In the care of the engineer.

Chorus.--

You purchase your ticket,
  Take a seat within the car,
No matter of your destination,

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[1] *MJ*, September, 1870, p. 414.

Be it near or far,
Just think of him who rides ahead,
Whose Brain is ever clear,
Whose eyes are ever on the track--
The careful engineer.

Chorus.--

Oh, the bride and the groom,
They take a bridal tour,
And often choose the railroad,
The swiftest and most sure.
Oh, the day it has closed,
And the shades of night appear,
They lay their bodies down to sleep,
In the care of the engineer.

Chorus.--

In the morn they awake,
And cast a glance outside,
Oh! we're fairly flying!
Remarks the thoughtful bride,
I know we're going very fast,
My love, you need not fear,
Although we're on another line,
We've a sober engineer.

Chorus.--

And now to finish my ditty
A word to the Brotherhood;
For each one will acknowledge,
It's done a power of good;
It teaches us sobriety,
And other things most dear;
Then come, my brothers, let's sign the pledge,
And quit your lager beer.

Chorus.--"

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APPENDIX III

TEMPERANCE REGULATIONS OF THE NICHOLS COPPER COMPANY[1]

" The State Law says if an employee has been drinking and he is injured, the Company does not have to pay him money.

The Company has found that men who drank [sic] are injured much more than men who do not drink liquor.

Beginning February 1st, (Monday) at 7 a. m. and thereafter no beer, wine, spirits or alcoholic drinks of any kind will be allowed to be brought into the works of the NICHOLS COPPER CO.

Any employee having such in his possession in the plant will be dismissed immediately without notice.

All shift men in Smelter, Power, Casing or other departments--that is, men who work 8 hours, will not leave their work for lunch during work hours. If they wish lunch they will bring it with them when they come to work and eat it during spare minutes while working.

The 9-hour day men can leave the works between 12 noon and 12:30 for lunch if their homes are near enough so they can get back to work in half an hour.

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[1] Brewing and Liquor Interests, Vol. I, p. 196.

If 9-hour day men who leave works between 12 and 12:30 noon, go to saloons for lunch, we will assume they buy beer and they will be discharged without notice.

. . . .

... after men come to work at 7 a. m. there are more injured, also after men come to work at 12:30 there are more men injured.

For this reason any employee who gives evidence of having drank /sic/ liquor before coming to work either by his actions, his way of speaking, or his breath, will be discharged without notice.

Heads of departments and watchmen are instructed to discharge all men instantly for any of the above reasons.

The Company believes that the abolition of liquor will be for the best interests not only for the Company but for the employees.

It is suggested that all employees take this circular home and read it to their wives and ask their wives if they do not think these are very good rules for everybody.

Laurel Hill, January 16th, 1915.
Long Island, Queens Co."

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